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THE THREE SPANIARDS.

VOL III.

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A



THREE SP/1111

BOOK

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THE  
THREE SPANIARDS,  
*A ROMANCE.*

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BY GEORGE WALKER,  
AUTHOR OF THE VAGABOND, &c.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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..... "Art thou any thing?  
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,  
That mak'st my blood cold, and my hair to stand?  
Speak to me, what art thou?"

JULIUS CÆSAR.

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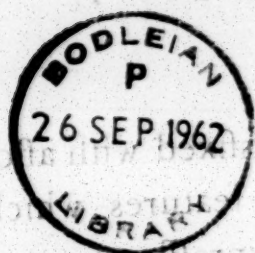
London:

PRINTED BY CAMPSON LOW,  
FOR G. WALKER, N<sup>o</sup>. 106, GREAT PORTLAND STREET;  
AND HURST, NO. 32, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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1800.

# THREE SPANARDS



I TOOK  
saying upon the  
raised his hand in expectation to excuse myself  
when I heard on a sudden the sound of  
voices over me, and looking up beheld  
the same men returned to their  
labour. I was too much surprised to  
think of resistance, and I feared that in  
the first heat of their passion I might fall  
beneath the cruelties which befallen to en-  
slave over my head.

THE  
THREE SPANIARDS.

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CHAP. I.

I STOOD transfixed with astonishment, gazing upon the features which yet retained sufficient expression to excite regret, when I heard on a sudden the sound of voices over me, and looking up beheld the same men returned to finish their labour. I was too much surprised to think of resistance; and I feared that in the first heat of their passion I might fall beneath the cimitars which flashed in circles over my head.



The epithets of "Dog of a Christian!" convinced me of the truth of my first suspicions. The person whom I had observed in so much grief interposed in my favour, insisting that they should first hear my intentions; and distinguishing by my uniform, that I was an officer in the army, he ordered that I should be taken on board as a prisoner. This debate took place while I remained beneath them in the grave: in which situation I had no reason to expect my life, and might think any conditions a favour.

While they were leading me down to the boat, with their cimitars within an inch of my throat, I could not but accuse myself of indiscreet curiosity; and I turned my eyes with a melancholy look towards the country I was thus torn from, with very little hope of soon visiting it again. Having pinioned me upon deck, they loosened the sails to the wind, and stood away to sea. I had never before been upon this unstable element; and though  
every

every object was new, my mind permitted me not to enjoy the satisfaction variety can give.

My eyes turned towards the receding shores; and I sighed as the indistinct objects vanished from my sight. My situation was far from pleasant; and entreaties for the liberty of only walking the deck, were unattended. I now had every reason to fear, that I should be treated as a slave by these uncivilized people; who regard not the laws of nations, which ought to be preserved religiously inviolable in the midst of war. I requested to speak with the captain of the corsair; but the rough mariners returned my entreaties with abuse, threatening me by their looks and gestures.

In the morning the captain came upon the deck, and I judged from his air, and the grief on his countenance, that he was the person who had superintended the strange funeral I had witnessed. A violent debate ensued between him and several

ral of the crew ; and, from their signs, I had no doubt but I was the subject. The captain seemed to endeavour to conciliate them, but they became more furious ; and at length to preserve the crew from mutiny, he delivered me over to their wishes—himself standing by, to preserve me from personal violence.

In a moment I was plundered and stripped ; and my arms being bound fast, the picture I so highly valued was torn from my neck by a brutal wretch, notwithstanding he saw the concern it gave me. The captain, who stood over them with a mixture of shame and indignation in his countenance, was touched by my earnest entreaties for the portrait ; and possibly supposing it to be that of some chosen lady, he insisted upon having it from the sailor, who very reluctantly complied with the demand.

He gazed upon it with the air of a man struck with surprise, which I attributed to the Moorish habit. He commanded them



to release me, in a voice which signified his resolution to be obeyed; at the same he clapped his hand on a pistol, which he wore in his belt, to enforce obedience. The sailors more readily complied, as they had plundered me of every thing, and stripped me to my shirt.

“ Christian !” said the captain in Spanish, “ by what means gained you the possession of this picture?—whom does it resemble ?”

I replied with respect, that it was a story of some length, and not to be told by a person stripped as I was upon a public deck.

“ Right,” replied he: “ follow me.”

I attended him into his cabin; and, after putting on a Moorish dress, and receiving some refreshment, I related to him the means by which it came to my possession, and how much the beauty had struck my fancy.

He seemed to hear all I said with an earnest attention. The name of Don Padilla made him colour with rage.



“Spaniard,” said he, when I ceased speaking, “take back your picture.—It is the likeness of my own sister, Lady Zidana. I was very young when the barbarous edict of Philip banished my whole family, except that sister, who would not forsake her husband and child, to accompany her brother Hyradin and myself into exile. I have never been able to learn with certainty the fate of herself and her child, but from report: and I have no doubt the hand which destroyed her husband, Count Ferendez, would not slacken in removing her, when fancy or passion should have changed.”

I dared not in our first conversation touch upon the strange adventure I had witnessed on the shores of Malaga; but the more I became acquainted with Mustapha, the greater was my astonishment at what seemed so barbarous an action.

Mustapha, who dwelt upon the water three parts of his time, retained his favourite mistress in a small cabin; nor would  
his

his jealousy or delicacy permit me her sight. He never mentioned her but with the greatest reserve; and he seemed visibly agitated when any hint tended towards her. From which I judged that some difference had happened between them—being ignorant of the customs of the East.

We pursued our voyage for several days without falling in with any vessel; and the sailors, angry at their disappointment, and dissatisfied with the favours bestowed upon me, being obliged to refund their plunder, began to shew their disapprobation in murmurs of revenge.

Mustapha was not blind to this disposition of his crew, and cautioned me to be upon my guard.—This precaution was not without necessity.

On the second night after receiving it, I retired to my own cabin, after finishing a game of chess, of which the Moors are fond to extravagance. The tediousness of the game had wearied my mind, and laying down in my clothes, I quickly fell asleep.

I dreamed that I was in the same road where I first beheld the spirit of Count Ferendez, and I now fancied the same figure approached, running with a drawn sabre in his hand. "Fernando! Fernando!" cried he as he ran, "grasp your sword and defend yourself!—Awake!—Awake!"

The noise of his shouting waked me in reality, and I found my sword unsheathed and grasped in my hand. I was wondering at this singular circumstance, when I heard a light step, and the ship heeling, a slight slip on the boards. The cabin was totally dark, and I remained still, my sabre firmly grasped in my hand ready to strike. The person drew near, evidently constraining his breath, lest he might awaken me.

He approached, and stood over me. I could distinguish the raising of his arm, no doubt to plunge his poniard into me. At that moment I darted my sword-point before me, which he received in his throat as he was stooping over me. A faint sigh was



was all that he uttered as he fell upon the flooring; and starting up, I began to examine, as well as the darkness would permit, the person of this assassin.

My next consideration was the resentment I had to fear from his comrades; and I doubted whether Mustapha himself would have power to save me from their revenge.

The ruffian yet grasped his poniard in his hand; but his arm, which but a minute before was braced to midnight murder, was now unnerved and passive, and I had no difficulty in taking his weapon, which was one of those Eastern daggers whose wound is incurable.

I resolved to hazard the displeasure of Mustapha by wakening him, if I could trace the way to his cabin in the dark. To defend myself against any opposition I might meet, I retained my sword in one hand, and the dagger in the other; having first secured my pistols in my sash, and groping my way in silence, I advanced towards the captain's cabin.



A confused sort of noise ran between decks, and the clash of swords reached me. I flew forward, not doubting but the crew had mutinied, and found Mustapha fighting like a tiger at bay amidst six or seven of his crew. He was covered with blood, which flowed from several wounds; and fearing that these were mortal, in which case my own death was near and inevitable, I resolved not to die tamely.

Animated by the resistance of Mustapha, I became fired with his ardour, and fell upon the nearest with irresistible force; the poniard I held in my left hand, while I pressed forward with my right, did great execution; and I had already stretched three upon the cabin floor, amidst streams of blood, when Mustapha's foot slipping on the glutinous boards, he fell; and a Moor leaping upon him, raised his arm to cleave his skull with an axe. He was too far distant to be reached by my sword, if I could have broken through those who opposed me. I stretched out my left hand  
with

with the poniard to keep them at bay, and dropping my sword, which was fastened to my wrist by a chain, I seized one of my pistols, and, by the greatest miracle, the bullet went through the ruffian's head, and he fell to the ground, giving Mustapha opportunity to rise.

This pistol was the first which had been fired; it alarmed the whole ship's crew; and several not having been in the secret, crowded forward to the cabin to the relief of their captain, and the fight became general and bloody. The reinforcement we had received enabled us to clear the cabin. The mutinous crew drew up their forces at the mouth of the hatchway, intending at least to take the command of the ship.

In this situation, desperate measures were alone equal to the danger. The stairs to the deck were so narrow, that it would have been easy to kill every man who should have attempted to enter. A barrel of gunpowder stood in one corner

of the cabin, and ordering it to be placed at the foot of the stairs, Mustapha knocked off the top, and calling to the men who stood ready to fire upon any one who should appear, he bade them fire away, if they wanted to be blown into the air: at the same time he swore by Mahomet, if they did not return quickly to their duty, and surrender their arms, he would fire the powder, and leave them only the wreck to carry them to Tetuan; where they would all be empaled on red hot stakes.

This threat, and their knowledge of the man who uttered it, together with the sight of the powder, which was actually placed where a spark would have destroyed them in a moment, produced its effect. A parley ensued; and, after mutual promise of oblivion, peace was restored.

In addition to seven or eight killed, many were severely wounded in this affray; and Mustapha was so much exhausted with exertion and loss of blood, that I had many doubts of his life.

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He expressed in strong terms his acknowledgment of the services I had rendered him: and from that hour I began to be received as a friend. I had not banished from my memory the singular event I had witnessed on the shores of Malaga; and the more I became acquainted with the character of Mustapha, the less capable did he appear either of unnecessary violence or treachery; but whenever I ventured to touch upon this point, his countenance overcast, and he evidently struggled with some bitter reflection.

His wounds slowly mended, and as we drew near Tetuan (having cruised some weeks without success), he began to speak of the country with satisfaction.

“ Yet,” said he, “ though the charms of this country are great, I feel not the same pleasure in approaching it I should have done, but for an unfortunate event, to the sad conclusion of which you were witness. I should have been pleased to introduce you to my brother Hyradin; but



after what has happened, I dare never see him more. His castle is some leagues up the country, and I shall remain at Tetuan till I refit for another cruise."

This was the first time he had himself led to the subject of many of my reflections; and I determined to hazard something to develop the mystery.

"You have mentioned an incident which has long excited my surprise," answered I; "and I fear that some accident was the cause."

"No," replied he: "had it been an accident, I should have had reason to excuse myself; but it was the effect of a blind passion, and will for ever sting me with unavailing remorse. The truth is unknown even to my ship's crew; but to you, Fernando, who have saved my life, I will explain this secret which poisons my existence."

"Zaide is the name of a lady, whom I have chosen for her wit as the companion of my voyages; but during the last trip,  
 1 the

she remained at my brother Hyradin's. When every thing was ready for our sailing, about two months since, she came to Tetuan, bringing with her several presents from my brother, and a beautiful slave, which, she informed me, had been given her by Zulma, my brother's favourite wife.

" From the first day of our voyage, I remarked a certain intelligence between Zaide and this slave, whom she called Hassan; and my mind became tainted with tormenting suspicions. We had been some time at sea, and though the favours she bestowed upon Hassan excited my strongest suspicions, yet I detested no positive facts, which might confirm the frenzy which stung me.

" The weather we had met had been unruffled by a storm; but at this time we encountered an high gale of wind, which blew us fast upon the shores of Spain; and for the time of its duration, our vessel was very much agitated. The duty of my

flation required me to be upon deck, and after several hours labour, I returned suddenly to my cabin, where I found Hassan with his arms twined round the waist of Zaide, while her head reclined upon his shoulder.

“ They were too much engaged in conversation to observe my approach; and something tender that was said by one of them, was answered by a kiss.

“ My blood ran boiling through my veins; and I have wondered with myself that I did not pierce them both at once: but excess of passion produces a calm. I silently withdrew in a delirium of rage; and meditated for some plan of excruciating revenge, that should search for every nerve, and wring it with agony.

“ From this I soon turned to enjoy in my then state of mind, a more refined mode of revenge. “ He shall expire gradually before my eyes,” said I to myself. “ She shall see that rosiate colour fade away, and his meaning eyes sink into in-  
animation:



animation: his voice shall fail him in expressions of tendernefs; and in place of a body scorching with the flames of passion, she shall clasp in her arms an icy and motionless lump of clay. He shall then be laid in her bed; he shall be the partner of her voyage; and, when we reach land, I will confine her in a chamber with this object of loathing, and daily shall she watch the progress of putrescency."

"I hastened to execute this infernal project, blinded by an unaccountable frenzy. I concealed my suspicions: and proposing to regale after the late storm, I ordered no one to interrupt us in the great cabin during the entertainment. Zaide had accustomed Hassan to sit with us at table, under pretence of his youth, and this was amongst the first things which excited my suspicions.

"During the feast I infused some drops of a subtle and incurable poison into the Sherbet of Hassan. I gazed upon his features, and involuntarily felt pity for his youth

youth and beauty : but the caresses I had witnessed arose as a cloud over my senses, and steeled my heart to pity.

He raised the cup to his mouth. " I will drink," said he, " the health of my late master Hyradin ; as you have told me the people of Europe do."

" At the name of my brother, I felt a sudden glow flush over my face, and I made an effort to stretch out my hand, to prevent him taking the fatal contents, while he drank the health of Hyradin ; but he had already swallowed more than sufficient.

" The effects were not immediate ; and Zaide remarked to me, how much liquor improved the sparkle of the eye. A flash of fury darted from mine at these words, which seemed to be an insult upon my easiness : and I gazed upon them with rising satisfaction, at the idea that my revenge was begun.

" Take a glass of this Jerusalem wine," said Zaide to me. " I have a secret to tell

tell you, which you may as well know now, as later. Confess, Mustapha, that you have been jealous of this little slave?"— At the same time she placed her hand upon his shoulder.

" Confusion, Madam !" cried I, starting up. " Do you injure and insult me too ?"

" In place of answering me directly, she broke out into a fit of laughing, which raised my fury into raving.

" I entreat your pardon," said she, when she feared she had proceeded too far. " You shall know our secret—This little Hassan is your niece Zara."

" These fatal words deprived me for some moments of all sensation. My ideas whirled in dreadful confusion; and closing my eyes, I sunk forward with my head upon the table. Zaide uttered a cry at this unexpected incident; but her attention was diverted from me, by the sudden flushing and paleness of Zara, whose heart swelled



swelled and panted with the palpitations of death.

“ I raised my head, aroused by the cries of Zaide. My two slaves ran into the cabin—I should have sacrificed them in my frenzy, if they had not precipitately fled. Holy Prophet! what were the feelings of my soul at that moment! The flowing ringlets of Zara’s fine hair fell down behind from beneath her turban, and the robe she had unfortunately assumed being open to give her breath, her fine neck and heaving breast too fully proved the truth of Zaide’s assertion.

“ What horror spread over me, when I saw all her lovely features distorted with pain, and knew that no antidote on earth had power to save her. I cursed my own folly, and the strange disguise which had led to it: and scarcely could the tears and lamentings of Zaide prevent me from committing violence on myself. Zara every moment lost some portion of life; her utterance

terance failed, her senses were bewildered, her limbs were convulsed, and the powerful drug shook every nerve through her frame.

“ No words can express the agonies that rent my soul, when I beheld her expire! “ Wretched Zaide!” cried I, “ see the effect of your foolish concealment of the person of my niece! Who shall account to my brother for this event? Now will he have to mourn the loss of both his children.”

“ Alas!” replied Zaide, weeping bitterly, “ it was her ardent desire, if possible, to see Spain, which her father has so often described to her as a land of Paradisial luxury ; and she had some hope that chance might lead her to discover her lost brother Ali. She knew that neither Hyradin nor yourself would have entered into her project, and I have unfortunately been the instrument of her destruction.”

“ I called in the slaves, and gave orders that the body should be laid in a chest,  
with

with perfumes and spices to preserve it till our return to Tetuan; but the superstitious mariners insisted, that some misfortune would befall us: and thus was I obliged to make the nearest shore, as I could not think of committing to the devouring fishes so precious a body. We concealed from the sailors that Zara was other than the slave Hassan, and you became a witness of her irregular interment."

While I condoled with Mustapha, who shed tears as he recounted the good qualities of his niece, we were interrupted by a sudden shout upon deck, and an hurrying noise: which gave us some apprehension that a new disturbance had arisen. We flew upon deck with our sabres drawn, and soon learned the cause of the alarm, by perceiving a large Spanish vessel between us and the shore.

She bore down upon us, and from her size left us no chance of escaping; she being a ship of the line, and our vessel only a galley with oars.

" I shall



“ I shall now,” said Mustapha to me, “ have to depend on you in my turn for protection. Fate is frowning upon me ; and I am willing to suffer, that I may atone for my own excesses : but I entreat you, by our friendship, to protect the unhappy Zaide from insult.”

I had scarce time to make my assurances, before the long-boat of the man of war came along side, and, our colours having been struck at their first shot, they boarded us without any opposition.

The Spaniards, in the triumph of so easy a conquest, began to exult, and to commit several outrages beneath the honour of the Spanish nation. I represented to them, that tumult ill became true honour : but this was not the moment of reason. I hastened back to the cabin, Mustapha having surrendered, and for the first time beheld Zaide, to whom I offered my protection. I conducted her, shedding tears, upon deck, and demanded in a tone of firmness to speak to the superior officer.

I in-

I instantly knew him to have been a person I had formerly served, and who in fact owed his station to my interest.

This was a fortunate circumstance, as his authority and my representations restored the sailors to their senses; and the galley being run along side the Spaniard, we went on board, and were introduced to the commander. My influence procured a separate cabin for Mustapha and his lady: for whatever I might place to the account of gratitude, I could not forget that he was brother to the lady, whose portrait had so much engaged me.

A fair wind wafted us to the little harbour of Ceuta, where I found my troops, and our meeting was alike unexpected. The duty they had to perform was harassing; the Moors seeming resolved to finish a siege, which, for duration, rivalled that of Troy. I procured Mustapha the freedom of the town; but having been accustomed to roving, and that upon an ever-

ever-varying element, the confinement of the fort, preyed upon his health.

I determined to use my endeavours to procure his exchange or escape; but the closeness of the siege, and the vigilance of the garrison, rendered it nearly impossible to quit the place. My situation as captain of a regiment allowed me many liberties, when my soldiers were on duty: but then the abuse of those liberties was equal to a forfeiture of a parole of honour; and on that point friendship had no power.

I examined, day after day, the fortifications. At a distant part from where my men were stationed, I observed a part of the works which were old, and appeared easy to be scaled. A solitary sentinel kept watch. I entered into conversation with the man on guard, and learnt that he had been three years in the fort.

“ It has been my lot,” said he, after other discourse, “ many a time to trace this rampart backward and forwards: the winds have whistled round me, and the light-



lightnings have fallen at my feet: but all this was nothing to what I suffered the last time I was on duty at this station."

"What was that my friend?" inquired I; "was you taken ill upon your post?"

"No," replied he, looking cautiously round him. "I was walking along this old wall, and looking over the distant country by moonlight, when I saw an old foldier of the hussars coming slowly forward. It was near midnight, and I knew there were no foldiers of that description in the fort, which made me wonder the more.

"Well, well," said I, "who was it?"

"That you shall hear in due time," answered he, looking round through the duskiness of night. "I thought to be sure it was some spy, or some foldier newly arrived, and was going to challenge him, when he suddenly stopped facing me, and I perceived round his helmet a circle of blue flame. I should have supposed it the effects of lightning, which often plays upon  
the

the point of my bayonet, but no clouds hung above us: and I instantly knew it to be the devil."

"By what mark?" said I.

"What could be plainer?" returned he. "I saw the lancing fire play round his helmet; I smelt the burning sulphur, which I am told is to him like perfume: and his frightful countenance fixed me to where I stood. He moved by me without my having power to utter a word. I saw him advance and descend into the well, which is in the angle of yonder bastion: and I had no doubt but it was Belzebub, coming to spy out for his friends the Moors."

"Has any other person," said I, "seen this phantom? Did you examine the well afterwards? Are you certain you were not deceived?"

He was piqued at my doubts; and, to confirm the truth of his story, added several ridiculous and absurd circumstances, which shook my belief in the whole. I  
 learned,

learned, however, that two of his comrades had seen the same appearance; though he assured me, they would not speak to any body about it, for fear of being laughed at.

My curiosity was aroused at this incident; I took the names of his comrades, with the design to search the truth of this story. I questioned those soldiers apart on the following day, endeavouring to dive into the juggle if their was one; but their answers were so reserved, that they only served to confirm me in the fact.

I had a desire to be witness myself of this incident, but they started a thousand difficulties. One of them observed, that he believed it to be the spectre of some soldier, whose skeleton laid in the well. These soldiers refused to have any concern in my proposed project of speaking to this sprite; and I resolved to apply to Francisco, who seemed to have none of that 'mystery about him.

I repaired



I repaired to his lodgings, and learnt that the night had passed away without alarm. Again he repeated to me every particular of the dress and manner of this singular personage.

On the fourth night it would again be the turn of Francisco to watch on the battlements. "Keep you secret till then," said I; "your comrades do not circulate the story. We will endeavour to find out the truth; it is most likely some fellow who is playing tricks for the sake of a ramble by moonlight."

I parted from him, and hastened to inform Mustapha of the incident. "What prevents your personating this old huffar?" said I: "you will pass without question into the well, which I have examined, and which is admirably adapted for concealment, till you find opportunity to escape into the camp. When there, you may easily find means to ransom Zaide, who shall remain under my protection."

"Will it not be sacrilege," said he,

VOL. III.

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“to take upon me the guise of a spirit? Will not some mischief attend me?—And how can I imitate the sulphureous flame around my head?”

“That we may omit,” answered I. —“I see nothing to prevent success. I will be with the sentinal, and prevent pursuit.—Fortune or fate has suggested the means of your flight; and pointed out to you the path that must lead you to liberty.”

“But if I am to remain here,” answered he, “all I can do will be without effect.”

“And if you are not to remain here,” replied I, “the smallest effort will be sufficient.”

This fine argument convinced him: and after settling some particulars relative to Zaide, he agreed to follow my directions.

## C H A P. II.

**I** PREPARED an hussar's dress, which I had some difficulty to procure; and having dressed Mustapha, I caused him to practice the attitudes he was to observe, in order to inspire the greater fear. He was much concerned at leaving Zaide behind him; though he no longer felt for her that ardour of attachment which had burned in his bosom before the unfortunate adventure of Zara. — So dangerous is it for women to tamper with a passion so easily raised, and so transcient in its nature.

I had no doubt of being able to procure her a conveyance to Tetuan; at which place he proposed to meet her, if he did not before find means of her ransom.



The night at length arrived ; and, having made every preparation, I hastened before him to the rampart. It was dark, the moon being in the wane, and Francisco was not a little satisfied at my arrival.

“ I counted the tedious minutes, Mastro,” said he ; “ the wind chatters on the battlements, and I began to fear the appearance of this dead huffar.”

“ Had he been alive, you might have had more reason to fear him.”

“ No, no,” replied he, standing firm ; “ it is because he is dead that I fear him. I do think there is a storm brewing in the air.—Well, let it blow ; I do not value a tempest.”

“ Nor I,” answered I. — “ Soldiers should be invulnerable to wind and weather. At what hour does this spectre appear?”

“ About midnight.—All these wandering beings choose that hour. The noon of night—when all mankind are supposed  
to

to be at rest. They do not much love company I fancy."

"Very likely," answered I.

"Hush!" said he, in a low voice, leaning on his arms, and listening to a distant step.

"What do you hear?" said I: "do ghosts tread heavy?"

"I know not," answered he, in a whisper; "but listen—I thought I heard a foot fall."

We remained silent and listening; the night being too dark to see at any great distance. "Call the watch-word," said I, "and fire if you receive no answer."

"Fire!" repeated Francisco—"Of what use would that be?—I would not quarrel with the spirit. No, no, as my comrades said the other day, Let him alone, 'tis as well to have friends every way. Listen!—I am certain a step draws near."

I listened, and felt real anxiety that Mustapha did not appear; beginning to apprehend that his superstitious reverence

had overcome his resolution—when I distinguished from a distance an advancing step. It was not yet twelve o'clock, but no sound was to be heard in the garrison, except the calling of the sentinals from post to post. The solemnity of the night, as I stood on the ramparts and heard the wind passing by, was sufficient to create images of terror.

Mustapha at last appeared. His motions were majestic and impressive: and he passed by us with a solemn step, preserving silence. The hair of Francisco bristled up, and he seemed fixed to the place with terror, watching the supposed spectre as it moved to the spot I had marked, where the descent was easy, and he was soon lost to our view.

“Now will you believe?” said Francisco: “now you have seen with your own eyes? but he had no flame playing round his helmet, and he seemed in my eyes much taller.”

“Is



"Is it not the same then?" said I.  
"Why did you not challenge it?"

"Because I had not power to move—I was rivetted to the ground."

I felt something like shame at this expression. It convinced me that what I had heretofore attributed to the benumbing power of supernatural appearance, arose in fact from excess of terror, which suspended the powers of action in the animal economy.

I stood silent and thoughtful, while these reflections passed over me. Francisco did not attempt to interrupt my reverie, believing that I partook in his fears: and while we thus stood, the melancholy tones of the castle bell striking twelve, spread upon the silence of midnight, and gave birth to reflections, which are only to be felt in particular situations. I was fast entering into a solemn train of thought, when Francisco suddenly took me by the arm, to rouse me from my reverie.

“ Heaven and the Holy Apostles be our guard!” said he: “ who could it have been that passed us? Here comes the first spectre, with the sulphureous flame around his helmet!”

I turned my head to look along the rampart; and perceived indeed the light of a blue steady flame, waving like a faint glory over the helmet of an huffar, such as had been described to me.

The person came slowly forward, and his eye fixed upon me, with a look full of resentment. The complexion was dark, and the features commanding; but there was none of that palid and death-like expression which dwelt upon the countenance of the wounded spirit of Ferendez, and characterised the inhabitant of the rotting earth.

My surprise at first was great, but my reason was not subdued, and perhaps from a knowledge of my own secret—I might have a suspicion of others. I stood firm,  
with

with my eye fixed upon this appearance. A lowering frown gathered on his brow, but I was not thus to be intimidated; and drawing my sword, I resolved to have a lounge at this huffar. He stood still at my motion: a misty cloud of sulphureous vapour gathered round him, and completely concealed him from sight.

I repented my rashness when I beheld this phenomenon. Francisco fell upon the ground, and I remained in uncertainty, while the huffar, enveloped in a cloud of smoke, which left a train behind, moved along the ramparts. He approached the bastion, beneath which was the well where Mustapha lay concealed. Apprehensive for his safety, I roused my resolution, and followed.

The figure descended the uneven and broken wall into the well, but stopped a few paces down, confounded at the sight of Mustapha, who stood with his dark lantern open, beneath some interwoven brambles.



His sudden cry determined me. I followed sword in hand down the steep, and so similar were the dresses, that for a moment I scarce knew which was Mustapha, till I perceived the waving flame which played upon the helmet of the huffar.

The stranger no longer found means of evasion, and shuddering at the sight of Mustapha, who appeared to him as rising from the well to punish him for assuming a familiarity with the dead—They stood gazing upon each other in mutual confusion and astonishment.

However my senses might have been deluded, I had no longer reason to doubt the imposture; and making fiercely at him, with my sabre pointed at his throat, I vowed instantly to dispatch him, if he made the smallest resistance.

“ Fernando de Coello,” said he, in a firm tone of voice, “ I call upon you, in the name of the lady whose picture you wear, to suspend your arm! This moment, it is true, I am in your power: but were  
 1 you

you to strike, in two minutes you would be a dead man."

"Impossible!" replied I, not a little confounded at his singular words. "Who are you that boast of such powers?"

"I am he who knows the secrets of your heart. I know the crimes of Don Padilla; and the fortunes of the Lady Zidana, whose picture you admire."

"Tell me," cried Mustapha, in the greatest impatience, "Tell me, I entreat, where I may find that long lost sister.—Is she living or dead?"

"The roses have long since faded from her cheek," said he; "the lustre has vanished from her eyes; and the beauty of her perfections is withered."

"Then she is dead!" cried Mustapha. "Fate is unconquerable!"

"You play upon us," said I, "by your evasive replies: say is Lady Zidana living or dead?"

"She lives," replied he.—"She resides at my castle:—but this is neither the time

nor the place for detail. I am Almonzer, the travelling physician you once met with in Spain. I was then traversing the country for intelligence."

"You are then a spy," cried I: "honour will not allow me to suffer your escape."

"You cannot prevent it," replied he. "Have you not already seen some of the effects I can produce by chymical secrets? I have only to break this small tube of glass, which I hold in my hands, to strike you at my feet. You are young, Fernando, and ignorant of the world; but you will learn experience: and the time may come when you will know me to be a powerful friend. I possess many secrets beside those of chemistry. I will be your guide, Mustapha, to the camp; where you will meet a person you will be glad to see."

"Remember," said I, "that I am here stationed in behalf of my country; and, that whoever approaches these walls in  
hostile



hostile array, will meet the opposition of my arm."

I took leave of my friend and Almonzer; ascending the ramparts, not a little astonished at the powers of this singular man, who seemed almost to rise above his species. I found Francisco yet lost in a deep swoon. I called to the next guard, and had him taken care of.

I took upon myself to arrest the two soldiers, who were in a plot with Almonzer to deliver up the town to the Moors; and the next day they suffered the reward of their treachery, in sight of the enemies' camp.

I procured, with no little difficulty, the freedom of Zaide; and she was sent with a flag of truce to Tetuan. The Moors finding that their stratagem had been discovered, and the faulty bastion repaired, resolved to try the effects of a general storm.

We had no apprehension of the event, our garrison being chosen men; and we  
prepared

prepared to receive them with alacrity.— We knew, by our spies, the day the assault would be attempted.

The morning opened with a fire from three batteries, very ill supplied, and so constructed as to do us little mischief. The martial music sounded along the ramparts, the streaming banners waved and trembled in the wind, and the drums beat to arms. The whole town was in confusion: the infirm, the women, and children, uttered cries of terror; and endeavoured to hide themselves in places that could have given them no safety. The uproar became universal. The din of arms, the clashing of swords, and the deep thunder of the cannon, mingled with shouts from every side, raised every soldier into an hero, and stifled the voice of pity and humanity.

An irregular, but furious crowd pressed forward to storm the walls; rushing upon death more like beasts of the desert, than regular trained soldiers: and were swept by ranks into the ditch, which flowed with  
human

human blood. Where the scaling ladders were applied to the walls, and mounted with raging Moors, they were dashed precipitately down the rocks, or smothered in the streams of blood which flowed in the ditches: yet they continued to succeed each other with unabated frenzy.

At the next station to where I was commanding, some daring fellows gained a footing on the battlements, followed by those behind them, like a swarm of bees, without a visible support but by each other. The soldiers fell back, and a cry of victory amongst the assailants, at once struck terror into our troops, and animated their own with a ferocity, that threatened to bear down coolness and skill.

The governor of the place fortunately arrived, when the fate of the garrison depended on a moment. He was supported by a troop of veterans, which had been judiciously reserved for emergency. "Follow me, Fernando," cried he; "draw off all the  
men



men you can spare, and we will drive these barbarians into the ditches."

I felt myself reassured at this speech. I endeavoured to inspire my troops with equal confidence; and we marched forward in irresistible array, and in as much order as if we had been upon the parade.

Our engineers brought an eighteen-pounder, loaded with canister shot, to bear upon the rushing crowd, which threw them into confusion. Our men then closed with pikes and bayonets, forming an impenetrable line, which turned the stream, broke the mad fury of the attack, and drove them like a flock of sheep over the ramparts. For the few minutes they had been in possession of the wall, they had broken down so much as to make a considerable breach, through which we had to drive the main body backwards upon a pressing crowd, which hemmed them round, and scarce allowed their retreat.

The standard of Mahomet was dipped  
in

in blood, and heaps of miserable wretches filled the trenches. Led on by the ardour of conquest, we stuck upon their rear, till we found ourselves in the open plain, opposed by a multitude, who again rallied, and turned upon us with fury.

I was debating, whether to endeavour to retreat, or fight till a new fortá should be made from the garrison, when a barbarian, mounted on a fine Arabian courser, rushed upon me with a long spear, to fix me to the ground: by a fortunate blow of my sabre, I struck the handle of his spear in two, and tumbling with the force of his thrust upon the ground, I dragged him from the saddle, and mounted in his place—waving my hand to my brave foldiers, who rushed forward to support me.

Fresh troops having reinforced us from the garrison, a long and bloody engagement ensued, with variety of success; and dreadful slaughter on both sides. I will not vaunt to you my own exploits; you have witnessed my performances in a field  
of

of battle, and this fight was not the least in which I have been engaged.

I found myself insensibly detached from my troops, before I remembered my danger. I looked behind, and saw thickening crowds that cut off my retreat. I grasped the reins firmly in one hand, and striking with the velocity of lightning on every side, my sword flashing through the air winged with death to whoever opposed me, struck a panic into the crowd around; and my generous courser, feeling the ardour of his rider, overthrew and trod down all who attempted to stand in his way. The enemy discharged their pieces behind me, to stay my speed; but, except a slight scratch upon one shoulder by a ball, I escaped without the smallest wound, and found myself in the open country, almost out of sight of the fort of Ceuta.

The battle still roared and raged behind me. A cloud of smoke and dust enveloped the combatants; and I stood still to behold this horrible display of human frenzy.



frenzy. The flashes of the artillery appeared like the dartings of lightning through an heavy sulphureous cloud, and the succeeding roar of the echoing vollies imitated the pealing thunder.

At length the Moors began to give way, and fearing to be overtaken by the crowd, I turned round my courser, flying over the sandy plains, and urging forward, till spent with heat, thirst and fatigue, I stopped on the banks of a little stream; and listening, like the hunted stag when he has winged the hounds, could distinguish no sounds of approaching tumult, nor perceive the distant clouds of promiscuous confusion spreading in the air, or rolling over the plain.

All was dreary and silent around me. The gliding stream moved without a wave over a bed of sand: no flower enamelled its side, or shrub gathered greenness from its waters. Yet to me it appeared adorned with charms; and sitting down, I enjoyed the luxury of ease after the toils of war.

My

My courser refreshed in the limped stream,  
bathing himself with visible satisfaction.

It was now past mid-day, and nature seemed to melt beneath an unclouded sun. The air was perceptibly hot, and no enjoyment could equal coolness and rest; but there was no shade near, nor any place to retreat from the burning beams, which drank up my juices.

In this situation no nectar could be more delicious than the transparent water; and I forgot, beside the grateful stream, the dangers that surrounded me. The roar of battle broke not upon my meditations; which returned to Spain, to my absent friends, and to a wish, that all my travels might terminate in the company of some charming fair, such as the portrait which I still preserved in my bosom.

I was aroused from my reflections by the prancing of my steed; who pawed up the ground, and reared himself with every sign of impatience. I admired the sagacity of the noble animal; who, no doubt, perceived

ceived the decline of day, and knew the length of way which spread between us and any place of repose.

I arose at his summons, and began to urge him to retrace the road we had passed: but he, probably knowing the direction to the interior of the country and his native plains, refused to obey my desires; and plunging with me into the stream, swam over and began to gallop, unchecked by the reins.

I was altogether easy at this adventure, for I remembered our excursion in the boat to the Moorish castle; and while I rode forward, I could not avoid in my own mind expecting some singular termination of this day's journey. It was impossible in these sandy and barren plains to quit the horse; for I might then wander and perish, without ever meeting an human dwelling.

He continued at his own speed, and the sun set upon this ocean of sand. I now began to tremble, lest the tygers and  
hyenas



hyenas, which haunt the desert, should scent us on the tainted gale. Hunger began to press upon me ; all the horrors of dreary solitude began to crowd upon my mind, and fill my fancy with the darkest forebodings. I had no knowledge of the country. I might, perhaps, be going forward to the great desert, where I must inevitably perish ; and my soul shuddered at the terrible idea.

## CHAP. III.

WHILE I thus gave loose to all the images of a despairing mind, I beheld at a distance a dark object, which broke the continuity of the horizon, and inspired a faint ray of hope that some habitation of man was nigh. The moon was not yet arisen. The wide and unsearchable wilderness was bordered around with impervious obscurity, which gradually brightened into the deep azure of the heavens, scattered with stars, that burnt with a lustre unknown in Europe; and which, in these fervid regions where humidity is exhaled by the blaze of day, serve to render night beautiful, and almost to dispense with the mild beams of the moon.

As

As I approached nearer this dark and shapeless object, which had inspired me with hope, I perceived a more regular form of building: the confused mass breaking into walls and battlements, with a quadrangular tower at either corner.

I was surprised to meet, in the midst of a desert, where no tree was to be found, a building which seemed the work of enchantment. A crystal stream flowed over golden sands, and crept around its walls, watering and refreshing an extended plantation of delightful verdure; and a fragrance so strong, that I could catch it upon the breezes of the night, informed me of the beauties of its cultivation.

My courser snuffed up the freshness of the stream; very unwillingly attending to the sauntering motions of inquiring caution. I had to learn what reception would be given to a stranger in this solitary abode; where suspicion seemed to have united with pleasure in forming a retreat.

I drew



I drew near the castle; from whence no light shone upon the dreary waste, nor any sound of inhabitant invited the weary traveller to the hospitable table. I marched my horse round one side of the building, without perceiving the gate; and began almost to believe that some giant or necromancer was the master of the castle.

While I stood giving wings to my fancy, the solemn moon raised its silver crescent amongst the stars; and my mind was delighted with the awful grandeur of the sight. I looked towards the far-spread plain of sterile sands, where all was obscurity, and danger, and doubt; and my soul seemed to start from the suggestions of fancy. I turned towards this grand pile of building; and the labours of man excited wonder, mingled with regret at the necessity of so formidable a preparation for safety.

While I was thus employed, a gentle strain of music, moving upon the breath of night, awoke my attention, and recalled

the invisible minstrels I had heard upon the sea shore to memory. It ceased, and a few irregular notes seemed to prelude a performance. I advanced cautiously towards that side of the tower, and through a narrow unglazed window, could discern the faint outlines of an human form: but the light was too obscure to distinguish with certainty.

After playing over a few airs, some light and some sad, the lute was laid aside, and I heard distinctly these words:

AIR.

The evening breeze, the morning air,  
 Liberty breathes and moves at pleasure;  
 The lark that soars aloft may share,  
 Every sweet of nature's treasure.  
 But wanting liberty, what can charm?  
 Not life itself is worth possessing:  
 Liberty poverty can disarm,  
 And wide diffuse increase of blessing.

I had learned sufficient of the Moorish dialect on board with Mustapha, and since  
 my

my arrival at Ceuta, to understand perfectly what might be spoken and to hold conversation; so that I was not at a loss for an interpreter to this little air: which the person no sooner finished than they withdrew, leaving me again without hope of gaining admittance; as from the words of the song, I supposed it to have been sung by a prisoner in the tower.

I waited near an hour, in hopes they might again appear, but in this I was disappointed; proceeding in my search round the castle. The river formed a moat wholly round it. On the opposite side I discovered a draw-bridge, but it was drawn up. It was impossible to gain admittance over the lofty walls. So much security bespoke the great suspicion of the owner; and I should have turned away from this impregnable building, had any other resource been nigh.

I stood on the brink of the stream, meditating various projects. My courser had long shewn signs of impatience, but now



he was not to be restrained; plunging at once into the river, he swam with ease to the other side, and landed me safe in the outer court of the castle. I paused to listen, looking round me with apprehension; no guard appeared on the watch, and the inhabitants were totally silent.

I dismounted, and hanging the bridle over my arm, proceeded forward. No creature of any description seemed to be abroad; and the carelessness of the watch ill agreed with the strength of the fortress. I gained the inner court, tracing my way by the light of the heavens. I ventured to call; but an hollow echo alone returned reply. I proceeded to the gate, it was firmly closed; and having knocked several times, I was astonished that no person answered the summons. My courser seemed to second my endeavours, striking his hoof upon the ground and neighing. "Surely," thought I, between fear and admiration, "this is a wonderful castle: and did I believe in tales of magic,  
this

this were sufficient to create alarm." It was now passed the hour of midnight, as I judged by the moon.

" I will hazard every thing," said I to myself. " I can prove the carelessness of the slaves, and my ignorance and necessity must excuse my daring."

I left the gate, and moving round the court, examined carefully where it was possible to enter, but there were no windows on the ground floor. Round the upper windows ran a balcony, where in martial times or holidays the gentry of the place might sit under cover, or behind the lattice-work, to view the exhibitions in the yard. It was some moments before I could form any device to climb this balcony ; when I recollected, that by the assistance of my *wonderful* horse I might possibly succeed.

I smiled to myself as I led him beneath the balcony. I mounted on his back, and with some difficulty made good my landing. I should have traversed the bal-

cony, but I found it divided by a strong partition: no doubt to prevent intrusion upon the ladies' side.

A few paces brought me to a little door, which I found open; and venturing forward in the dark, I passed through several apartments, every moment listening to hear if any one came nigh—but all remained profoundly still.

I now began to suspect that some mischief was abroad. That I had either stumbled on the fortress of robbers, who might be out on a journey of depredation; or, that treachery and murder was within. Not the remotest sound was to be heard, but what proceeded from the faint echo of my footsteps: and I trod so light, that I seemed to myself like a midnight assassin, stealing to the chamber of repose.

I passed one chamber after the other through a labyrinth of windings, but darkness prevented me observing the decorations or furniture. At last I fancied I could perceive a dawn of light, through a  
length



length of gloom. I advanced with extreme caution; for I knew not the reception I might meet, and I listened to catch the sounds of voices, fancy was ever creating.

As I drew near I plainly distinguished a sound, which I took for repeated sighs, as from a person in extreme distress. "Doubtless," thought I, "this is the prisoner whom I heard: now when midnight allows of privacy, they are indulging grief; and shall I then intrude upon those sacred moments?—Will not death follow my presumption? Yet perhaps heaven has conducted me hither, as an instrument of their liberation: yet whether they are male or female, I know not."

This consideration arrested my steps. I waited in hesitation; when I heard some person break into a fit of laughter, very different from the sounds of distress I had just heard. I drew my sabre, and crept slowly towards the door, which was about

two inches open, through which opening shone a strong and brilliant light.

I ventured to look through the opening, as much as it would allow, and perceived that this was a saloon, superb with the splendor of Eastern magnificence. The roof glittered with lustres.—On the side opposite me, played a fountain of perfumed water, which at once cooled and scented the air: the floor was covered with a rich carpet, and around were cushions of crimson silk, fringed with gold. Though my eye could have dwelt delighted on this display of elegance, my situation did not allow minute observation; being attracted by two persons, whom I instantly saw by their habits to be slaves.

One lay upon the floor venting sighs, which were the only signs of life I could distinguish; the other stood over him with a goblet of wine in one hand, and his yellow turban in the other. “Long life,” cried he, with a burst of laughter, “to Ben-

Benridden the Great, conqueror of the mighty Habil; master of the haram of the great Bashaw; lord of the household; great at the table, and invincible at the cup; who cares for no man, and defies—”

At that moment his eye, which he glanced round the room, as if to receive the homage of a crowd, caught my figure; which I had inadvertently advanced half forward, attracted by so curious a sight.

He remained fixed with one foot upon his fellow-slave; being either so terrified at my strange dress and appearance, or so overcome with liquor that he had no power to quit his position; and the goblet trembled in his hand.

I conceived at once my advantage; but the danger of alarming those who might be asleep, prevented my improving upon his terror. I entered the saloon therefore with diffidence; telling him, that if he did not betray me, he had no danger to fear. He stammered out some confused interrogatories, to which I replied.



“ Did you come here by the Bashaw’s orders?” said he.

“ Do you suppose me fool enough to venture without them?” returned I; guessing by this that the lord of the castle was absent. “ Come, most mighty Benridden, I see you can entertain yourself; now use your hospitality, and let me see how you can act the part of *lord of the household*.”

“ Mahomet is a witness,” said he, reclining towards a collation of sweetmeats, fruit, and wine, “ that whoever you are, you are heartily welcome; and if you are come by the Bashaw’s orders, you see what is my order—I love sobriety and regularity.”

I smiled at a thousand absurdities he uttered; and being both hungry and weary, I made no difficulty in seating myself on a cushion, and taking freely of what stood before me. Benridden, who was too far gone to think much of consequences, pressed the goblet upon me.

“ That’s what pleases me,” cried he;  
every

every sentence roaring with laughter.—

“ You can drink like a man: but as to that beast of a fellow Habil, he can’t drink at all. — I hate drinking alone, like a tipler.”

“ I suppose,” said I, “ you are master of the castle in the Bashaw’s absence?”

“ Yes, yes,” said he, “ I am chief eunuch of the haram, and governor of all the slaves. But it surprises me, after all, to think how you got in; unless you was drunk, and tumbled through the roof.”

“ I should like very well,” said I, “ just to see what taste the Bashaw has in his choice of a haram: the master, I see, is very well chosen.”

“ By Mahomet! you are right there,” said he, hickuping: “ but I don’t apprehend the Bashaw sent you here for that.”

“ No matter,” returned I; “ did you never go on another man’s errand and perform your own? Come, come, Benridden, master of the haram, and prince of the slaves—wine makes us all friends and confi-

dants — I shall keep your secret, depend upon it."

" So you shall, for I ay'nt going to trust you at present. — What time does the Bashaw return?"

" Nay," replied I, " judge yourself of the distance."

" And the chances of battle too," said he, pouring out some wine, half of which he spilt on the table.—" Well, here's his health, dead or alive—them Christian dogs are devilish tough, and make a long job of it."

I immediately judged that the Bashaw was at the siege of Ceuta; and I took hope to myself in the prospect there was of his being some time absent. I became more tranquil in mind; and in order to gain as much information as possible, bestowed so many encomiums on the wine, that Benridden was very shortly in a state little better than his fellow-slave.

I had then an opportunity to make observations. I had no doubt but these  
slaves,



slaves, presuming on the absence of their master, had lighted this saloon to indulge their vanity; and I was no longer at a loss to account for the negligence which had permitted my entrance.

The wine I had drank inspired me with a spirit of adventure; and trusting to the Bashaw's absence, the manner of my entrance, and the singularity of the incidents, made me despise trifling dangers; and taking a bunch of keys from Benridden, who lay upon his back on a cushion, I opened a door opposite to that which I entered.

The passage was lighted with lamps, and perfumes every where scented the air. I shall not attempt to describe to you the varied magnificence of every apartment I passed; in each of which played a fountain of a different form, diffusing around a delightful freshness, and, by its sound inviting to repose.

Every chamber was lighted by a large lamp from the center; and appeared in my eyes more splendid than the first. The  
last

last door I opened, led me into a room hung with rose-coloured silk, and lighted by a taper at each corner in a brazen stand, diffusing a soft and agreeable light throughout the chamber. On one side were arranged rows of Oriental flowers, unknown to me, but which breathed an aromatic perfume that incited sleep. But, notwithstanding so many charms to catch the wandering sight, all my attention was fixed on the person of a lady, who reclined upon a rose-coloured couch, in a robe of transparent purple, which fell over a dress of the finest muslin India can boast of producing.

Her admirable form seemed as if visible through the thin vesture; and the beautiful moulding of an arm, which was uncovered, sufficiently attested the graces of the sleeping fair. I advanced, cautious of disturbing the tranquillity of her slumbers; though I wondered, that at so late an hour she should repose upon a couch, unless from the intense heat of the weather.

I drew

I drew near to take a view of a face, which could not fail to be lovely, but which a light veil hid from my view. This I cautiously removed, and for a time stood entranced with indefinable rapture.

I beheld the beautiful Selima, the image of the portrait I had so long preserved with a lover's care: but the fine shade of the rose-coloured furniture, if possible, rendered her bloom more delicately lovely; and I could scarce believe, that the form I beheld was not of celestial moulding.

My whole soul was absorbed in love, every pulse beat with a new sense of existence. I took the portrait in my hand, to trace the amazing similarity; and where there was a difference, nature seemed to have made it with advantage.

"Beautiful creature," said I to myself, "is it for this I have been conducted through so many dangers?—But where do I find thee?—The inhabitant of an haram, and too probably the slave of some imperious and jealous tyrant. Wretch that  
I am!



I am! not to discover this choicest treasure of the world, till perhaps it is impossible to attain; or at least possess it with honour."

My agitation occasioned me to speak aloud; and the lady awoke with a faint scream of surprise at the sight of a stranger.

I sunk involuntary on one knee before her, repeating a thousand protestations to quiet her alarm. I flatter myself there was something of sympathy between our souls. She listened to what I said; and I fancied that a smile diffused itself over her countenance.

"Stranger," said she, in a voice which sounded in my ear like a seraph's, "you are ignorant perhaps of the danger you stand in, should the Bashaw arrive, and discover you here. How you have passed hither is a prodigy; but destiny may prevent your return, if you do not immediately comply with my desire, that you will do so."

"Lady," replied I, bowing, "what else  
could

could you have asked which I would not have instantly performed: but look on this picture, and tell me if you ever saw the original?"

I gave the picture into her hand. — "Great Mahomet!" exclaimed she, "the features resemble me. — I never, to my knowledge, sat to a painter."

"This charming painting," said I, "came into my possession, many months since, in a singular way. I have sought for the original with an interest I pretend not to describe: and now when a train of wonderful adventures have brought me into the presence of a lady infinitely more lovely, think you—"

"Hold, I beseech you," said she, blushing; "do not pour upon me such unmerited compliments. I am a poor wretched creature, though you see me here surrounded with splendor, and decorated with profusion."

My first ideas flushed upon my mind, and I trembled while I replied—"Is it possible,

possible, Lady, that in the midst of all which might gratify the senses, please the fancy, and give a charm to life; possessing the favour, and sharing the love of the Bashaw, you can be unhappy?"

"His love," replied she, "is poison to my soul; his favours are hateful to my eyes; and the pleasures which invite my sharing, are dull and insipid.—Where constraint is, there can be no reciprocal regard."

This speech, in place of removing my fears, increased my anxiety. I no longer doubted; and an heavy sigh broke from my almost bursting heart. I found it impossible to answer; and I gazed upon her features, drinking love and despair into my soul. She perceived my embarrassment; and perhaps imputing it to the freedom of her concluding words, blushed deeply, and seemed agitated with thoughts which admitted no utterance.

Thus for some time we gazed upon each other mutually confounded. Love surely  
can



can speak by the eyes; and the language they express is universally understood without variation of idiom.

I read sufficient to inspire me with courage. "Perhaps, charming lady," said I, "you have not been sufficiently long within these walls to be accustomed to their pleasures? or, perhaps you are too refined in your sentiments of love, to share the object with others?"

"No," answered she, with a charming confusion, "my heart never yet knew more than the name of love: I have neither parents, relations, or friends."

"Is it possible," cried I, in an ecstacy of satisfaction, "are you not then the mistress of this Bashaw?"

"No, nor will I ever," replied she, with an emotion of indignation. "Sooner will I be placed in the meanest drudgery of his palace. — I have the most profound aversion to him."

"Then let us fly," cried I, venturing to touch her hand with the greatest respect.

"Trust

“ Trust to the honour of a foldier, and a Spaniard.”

“ A Spaniard !” exclaimed ſhe, turning pale. “ I thought, indeed, you were a foreigner ; but Spaniards I have been taught to hate—Are they all like you ?”

“ It is reaſonable,” replied I, “ that you ſhould deteſt my countrymen ; your family poſſibly ſuffered under that edict, which was as cruel as it was unjuſt ; but believe me, lady, we now entertain different ſentiments.—Forget then that I am a Spaniard ; or remember it only to exact of me ſervices, which ſhall expiate my part of a national crime, committed in my infancy. I have a fine Arabian courſer waiting in the court-yard ; the Baſhaw is abſent ; the day has not yet broke upon the turrets of the caſtle ; and we may fly far beyond purſuit.”

“ But whither ?” inquired ſhe. “ Am not I, till this hour, a total ſtranger to you. Shall I conſent, at the firſt interview, to fly from one man, with another—and that man

man a Spaniard? I cannot, indeed I cannot."

"Then," cried I, "you have a regard to the Balhaw, a tie of gratitude for his favours, and that will induce you to yield to his wishes. Let this image of yourself plead for me; it has been my companion in numerous dangers; and possibly has been a secondary cause of our meeting this night."

She was about to reply, when we were alarmed by the cries of Benridden, as he stumbled along the passage, swearing revenge for the trick I had played him.

"Ho! dog of a Christian!" cried he, "I thought where I should find you,—You would not take my advice, and let the ladies alone.—I never was better qualified in my life to give advice."

"Well, what's the matter, Benridden?" said I; "what has happened?"

"O, nothing at all, nothing," stammered he: "we shall only be boiled, and roasted, and baked, before morning. I,  
for



for being hospitable, and doing the honours of the castle—You, dog of a Christian, for accepting it—and little Selima, for liking a young man better than an old one.”

“ All that is nothing to the purpose,” said I.

“ I said so, didn’t I?” replied he, reeling towards the door again. “ You may stay if you like it; I only called to tell you the Bashaw is returned.”

Selima trembled and turned pale.

“ What say you?” demanded I, “ have you seen the Bashaw?—Who is he? where is he? where did you see him?”

“ See him!—No, thank my stars, he has not seen me. I shall go and blow my brains out, to save him the trouble. I only called to advise you to do the same.”

“ Who has seen him?” said Selima: “ good Benridden, tell me.”

“ Aye, aye,” said he, “ I am good now.—Well, only see how these ladies coax a man of understanding!—I don’t know that  
any

any body has seen him, but I saw his horse."

"His horse!" repeated I, taking courage, "what colour is his horse? If it was a cream colour, that is the horse which brought me to the castle."

"Who is most sober now?" said he. "Would you persuade me, that his Highness lent his favourite horse to you?"

"If that is his horse," said I, "we are safe enough: the owner will probably never trouble this castle again."

"Thank Mahomet!" cried, he, "then we shall have time to put every thing in order: and the first great order is, that no living male, but the Bashaw himself, and I Benridden, his slave, enter these chambers."

"A moment's patience, my good friend," said I, finding that he became serious and sober together; "I have discovered in this lady a relation."

"Aye, aye, I dare say, a wonderful  
3 connection:

connection ; but not a bit nearer for the present."

" Go," said Selima, " go, *brother*, some fitter opportunity I will relate to you all that happened since our separation."

" When the Bashaw returns, my dear sister," said I, charmed with the sentiments this condescension gave birth to ; " we shall not perhaps have the opportunity we desire."

I bowed and withdrew, followed by Benridden. I had no doubt but if it was the Bashaw which I had dismounted, but he had fallen in battle : and I could not sufficiently admire, that the ill fortune of my rival should have been the means of introducing me to the lady my fancy had long worshipped. I resolved at all events to remain in the castle : and making Benridden a considerable present, at the same time that I hinted my power of betraying his negligence, I brought him over to my interest.

From



From him I learnt, that three months since the Bashaw had purchased Selima of a slave-merchant, who had dealings at Algiers; that, contrary to the usual customs of her sex and country, she had refused the offers, and resisted the attempts of her master; who had by persuasion and kindness endeavoured to bend her mind to her situation. He had not succeeded in his desires, when the calls of war hurried him from the castle; from which he departed with an hint, that she must prepare to be more compliant when he should return.

This implied threat increased my impatience, and determined me to use every argument to prevail on Selima to fly from so dangerous an abode; for though I had every reason to believe the Bashaw had been slain, yet my flight had been so immediate, that I had not witnessed his death.

Benridden appointed me a little chamber to sleep in. Though the fatigues of the preceding day were far beyond the strength of nature, yet the quick succession of events so occupied my mind, that it was long before sleep could envelop my senses with its mysterious veil: but when once recollection was overcome, nature asserted her right, and I remained till late the next day in a profound and refreshing repose.

On awaking, it was some time before I recollected myself, or could account for the singularity of all things around me. The chamber, where I lay upon a mat; the open windows without glass; and the burning heat; reminded me, that I was in the sandy plains of Morocco; and all my recent adventures became familiar to my memory — though I felt a sort of anxious fear, that Selima, the castle, and the beautiful gardens, might have vanished.

When

When I had dressed myself, and was satisfied that this magnificent castle yet remained, I hastened to Benridden, who provided me some food, and desired me to report, that I had arrived from the battle, with news of the Bashaw's death.

The non-appearance of the Bashaw, and the presence of his horse, confirmed the report; and created even in Benridden so much confidence, that he assumed the uncontrolled direction of the castle: threatening with the bastinado all those who refused to obey his orders.

I entreated him, again to permit me the company and conversation of Selima, but he was inexorable; alledging, that though the Bashaw might be dead, his heirs would revenge any treachery of this nature: at the same time he promised, when the night should return, that he would conduct her to the garden, where there would be no danger of meeting any other of the ladies; who, were



it only from jealousy, would rejoice to bring mischief upon Selima.

I was obliged to acknowledge his reasons; and flattered his pride not a little by so doing.

## CHAP. IV.

**DURING** the day I amused myself in the gardens; which were laid out with a luxury unknown in European climates: uniting every object which could gratify the senses, with the variations of nature.

The pelucid stream meandered over a bed of the finest sand; crept beneath bending mimosa, whose dropping branches entertained the eye; wound between sloping banks of soft verdure, sprinkled with flowers; or murmured over pebbles of polished surface, amidst a grove, whose coolness invited to rest; whose shades excluded the burning glare of day; and whose fruits gratified the taste, and refreshed the senses.

Beds of perpetual mignonet seemed scattered by nature in little dells. Description must be supplied by imagination, to form an idea of all the charms which art had created in this little spot: fertilized by the stream which, not far distant, lost itself in the sands. The golden bird of Arabia, and the nightingale of Persia, had been tamed to build in the groves; and when the fervor of day was past, their modulated song so mingled with the air, that the breath of harmony seemed to float amongst the foliage.

In the midst of this grove stood a temple, built of porphyry and parian marble, in a circular form. The windows were of Venetian glass, stained with purple; which precluded from sight without, and within streamed the temple with a cool light, as if shed by a constellation of sapphires.

This temple was erected to pleasure; and being without prospect, the internal decorations were planned with all the luxury of Eastern imagination. A pool,  
which



which was cooled by a marble basin, so polished, that every object was reflected, invited to its refreshing wave. A symphony of flutes breathed the softest strains, upon touching a secret spring which admitted a stream of air. Crystal vases contained delicious wines, which Mahomet has forbid in vain. Dried fruits were piled up in profusion; and the fresh could be easily gathered for use. The furniture was such as the greatest voluptuary of Europe could not easily suggest.

In the midst of so much magnificence it must have been supposed, that the heart of man might rest content: but an Arabic sentence, inscribed over the bath, sufficiently spoke the thoughts of its possessor, and drew a sigh from my breast:

*Let not the present moment escape thee un-  
enjoyed; for of the next, who shall assure  
thee?*

I turned round in the middle of this charming place. I supposed in fancy, that

it was filled with a party of beautiful slaves from the haram of the Bashaw, and that himself was seated upon an elevated cushion, the delicacies of the garden, wine made delicious with spice, and the air loaded with perfumes crowded upon the senses, and no means of pleasure left wanting.—What, in such a scene, would be the effect of this sentence? In one hour may all these beauties fade, the appetite fail, health depart from the frame, and the yawning grave open beneath our feet.

Such were my reflections in this temple of pleasure; and I hastened, melancholy with the ideas that arose on the transience of all things earthly, to ramble in the grove, and pull the bending grapes which clustered over me, like crystallized drops of wine.

I stretched myself upon a bank which gently sloped to the water, and was profusely covered with sweet-smelling violets, of various tints, the red, and blue, and yellow predominating. My sighs were  
breathed

breathed towards Selima; and I counted the moments with impatience till the first star of evening arose above the towers of the castle, and proclaimed the coming night.

Benridden did not fail in his promise; the non-arrival of the Bashaw gave him confidence, and the glass was not many hours together from his lips.

Once more I beheld the beautiful figure of Selima, as she advanced amongst the tufted flowers; and, not waiting till she came to where I stood, I ran to throw myself at her feet. Benridden, though ignorant himself of the passion of love, had sufficient knowledge to know we could dispense with his presence; and, to do us further service, while we sat upon a little seat of flowery turf, he stationed himself at the entrance of the walk to prevent intruders.

It was in this place that I gave Selima the pledge of my heart, and received some little acknowledgment in return. I spoke to her of Spain; the prospects before me;



and the pleasures of mutual esteem ; with that domestic satisfaction the promiscuous intercourse of the East destroys.

She informed me, that when she left Spain she was so young, that she had not the smallest recollection of relations or friends. “ I have heard my nurse, or whoever she was,” said she, “ repeat to me a thousand cruelties which took place in that action ; but she never mentioned names, or particularised circumstances relating to my family. We lived at Tunis till I was about five or six years of age, when my nurse sold me privately to a slave-merchant.

“ She had dressed me out to the best advantage, for the purpose of enhancing my value ; and I remember, in particular, that a string of pearls hung round my neck, which the merchant insisted should remain, as they gave me a very becoming look ; and, being pleased with my figure, he paid down the whole price which she demanded, and I was carried to his house.

“ My

“ My person engaged his attention, and my prattle his favour. I was educated with care and expence; and though he was an old man, he took pleasure in the advancement I made in my exercises; and never having experienced the caresses of a parent, he acquired that place in my heart.

“ I pass over the days of my youth; the pleasures of freedom, in rambling over extensive gardens and shady groves; in dancing before him in the European and Egyptian fashion: till about a year since, when my benefactor died; and his rapacious heir sold me to a merchant of Algiers, who again sold me to the Bashaw Hali, whose slave I now am.”

I expressed my thanks for this recital, and our discourse took a tender turn, where mutual affection visibly was interested: and though I could not overcome her fears of flying, and the unknown dangers of an unknown world; she acknowledged, that were it not for those dangers, she knew not

how far her fears of the Bashaw might lead her to trust to my sincerity.

I proposed that Benridden should accompany us; and as his reward, I offered him freedom, and a conveyance to any part of Morocco, or the Levant, he should choose. A proposal he would have adopted in an hour, had we not been certain of the Bashaw's death: which allowed us to take our plans at ease, and provide a suitable conveyance for Selima; who could not be exposed, without extreme hazard, in a country like Morocco.

It was day-break when I parted with Selima. I considered myself as peculiarly fortunate in the friendship of Benridden; who was well acquainted with the country, and might guide us over those sands, my well-trained courser had conducted me.

Benridden was not agitated with the hopes and fears of love. I urged him to let the ensuing night conduct us from the castle.

“One



“ One night,” said he, “ we will dedicate to pleasure, and the next to business.”

“ But my dear friend,” answered I, “ let the business be first; and then we may enjoy the pleasure with increased satisfaction.”

“ Or we may not enjoy it at all,” said he. “ Let Benridden alone for knowing something of life—He that sows, does not know who may reap: but he that reaps, need not care who was the sower. I proclaim it, and it shall be done. I will give to every slave in the castle a feast before my departure, and that this very night—the Bashaw’s brother will most likely be here to-morrow. I will have all the Bashaw’s ladies into the Celestial Saloon; and, may I never reach my dear native little city of Smyrna, if a single slave goes to bed sober!”

In vain I endeavoured to prevent the execution of his project; I am persuaded, he would rather have sacrificed his freedom.

The

The castle was involved in a sort of confusion, which always ensues on the absence or death of a chief; and if the slaves acted in concord, it was with a design of promoting their own pleasure.

We no longer regarded appearances. I passed several hours with Selima, rambling over this magnificent structure; and my eyes were not a little gratified with the sight of four ladies and their female attendants, who ran about the apartments with the giddiness of girls.

They considered the death of the Bashaw in the same light as the slaves; for, having no attachment, they rejoiced in novelty, and prepared for the entertainment Ben-ridden had promised them in the Celestial Saloon, one of the grandest places in the castle, and reserved by the Bashaw for his highest festivals.

Selima herself was not without expectation; and though I did not altogether feel satisfied, yet the novelty I expected, which in any other situation would have been

been impossible from the seclusion of the females, gave me considerable pleasure.

The ladies expressed their astonishment at my figure, in terms not a little flattering; but they had never before seen an European, and scarce any other man than the Bashaw. In particular, a lady, named Namouna, addressed herself to my notice; nor did she disguise the jealousy she had of my partiality for Selima.

I was embarrassed by her company, which deprived me of moments I could well have employed in particular discourse with Selima; and it was impossible to disengage ourselves without hazarding her resentment. She possessed a figure which would have dignified an high station: her fine dark eyes commanding respect, and the stateliness of her person enforcing obedience.

The other three ladies possessed more the manners of children. But I learnt with surprise, that the Bashaw's favourite wife remained in her apartments; nor  
would



would mingle in the scene of revelry : remaining to mourn the loss of a man whom she loved, and who had made her the mother of two children, both of which were dead.

I pitied her situation ; and I considered that this building, insolated in the midst of a desert, was a picture of the world ; where one neighbour, or one nation, shall rejoice at what is distress or destruction to the other.

I should have been happy in administering comfort to this lady, but the rules of decorum forbade my intrusion : and what comfort could I bestow, when I should pretend to bewail a man, whom, I had every reason to believe, had fallen beneath my arm. I judged it best to leave to time that consolation it never fails to afford ; and I prepared for the festival, which was to begin with the first hour of night.

Selima retired to her chamber to decorate herself, and I wandered along the flowery alleys of the garden ; whose walks

were not gravelled as in Europe, but spread beneath the feet a carpet of the finest verdure.

I sat down beside a fountain, to reflect and arrange in my own mind the dangerous journey I intended we should begin the following day; when, turning my eyes towards the castle, I beheld a full blaze of light shining from the windows of the central tower—and, for a moment, I thought the building in flames.

I soon however recollected myself, and was bending my way to the castle, when a slave came up to me, and making a low obeisance—"Seignor Spaniard," said he, "the great Bashaw desires your presence."

I started at the word Bashaw, and demanded if I had heard him right.

"The Bashaw Benridden," said he, laughing, "waits you in the Celestial Saloon. The ladies are all there; the dancers and the singers, just as if my Lord Hali had been alive."

"I will

" I will follow you, lead the way,"  
said I.

If I had been surprised by the splendor of the hall which belonged to the ladies' apartments, how much greater was my astonishment when I entered this wonderful saloon. It was in form of a dome, the roof of which was covered with small mirrors, sprinkled with golden spangles, so contrived, that they glittered in imitation of stars. Large lustres of variegated glass were suspended from the cupola; and wax tapers being interspersed amongst various coloured drops, gave them the appearance of constellated gems: the whole together reflecting so strong a light, that at the first entrance the eye was dazzled with brightness.

The columns which supported the dome, were covered with burnished gold, and entwined with wreaths of flowers, interspersed with tapers.

Between the pillars were hangings of  
blue



blue filk, glittering with stars. When these drew up, before an elevated throne of intertwined palm trees, the perspective seemed without end, every object being multiplied by large mirrors.

In this recess a table was spread with variety of dainties; and Benridden had taken care that wine, and those spices which promote thirst, should not be wanting. Frankincense and sandal wood perfumed the air: and a transport of pleasure irresistible seized the soul at the sound of music and mirth, which added to the gaiety of the place.

The ladies were seated upon elevated cushions; and I could not refrain smiling, at sight of Benridden placed in the canopy of state, which was hung with blue satin, like the rest of the drapery, and spangled with silver. He had had the assurance to dress himself in the best robe of the Bashaw; assuming the green turban and purple palice; while a plume of ostrich

trich feathers, set in a cluster of diamonds, nodded over his head.

My eyes were not long fixed upon Ben-ridden; being attracted by the more beautiful figures of the ladies, who shone in all the charms that nature and splendor can bestow.

Namouna was habitted in scarlet, trimmed with gold; which extremely became the majesty of her figure, and the darkness of her complexion. The other three were dressed in blue, in yellow, and in lilac; the latter of which was extremely delicate, and touched off a lovely countenance with an indescribable charm. But however I might admire each in their turn and altogether, I was perfectly charmed with the lovely Selima; robed in an habit of the purest white, fringed and spangled with silver. Round her neck hung a string of Oriental pearls, alternately hung with a bead of gold; and her hair was braided with flowers of the tufted snow-

snow-white and sweet scented keura; which had an effect altogether new. She seemed like an inhabitant of the skies, dropping Paradisial scents as she moved, and scattering light from the foldings of her robes.

My Spanish dress had a strange appearance, amidst the turbans and long robes of the East. I took my seat between Selima and Namouna; who had purposely chosen her place, that she might partake in my conversation. Benridden aped the Bashaw with no small humour. The ladies were in high spirits, and the dancers filled the saloon, which echoed with the music and peals of laughter.

Between the pauses of the entertainment, Namouna appeared thoughtful; and I more than once observed her eyes bent upon Selima, with a keenness and lustre which arose from the workings of anger restrained.

I could not remain blind to her advances, which it would have been impossible



sible to mistake ; and she scrupled not to rally me on my preference of Selima. This obliged me to preserve the profoundest silence with Selima upon the subject of our flight ; as I had no small apprehension that Namouna might endeavour to frustrate our intention. Our discourse was therefore general, and the subject of Spanish dances naturally presented.

Selima informed me that she had learnt the *fandango* to please her first master, who had once resided for some years in Spain ; and I entreated that I might accompany her.

Her figure was light as the zephyr ; and being obliged to turn her long robe back with one hand, it gave her an air of gaiety which well accorded with the dance, and displayed the motions of an inimitable form. The freedoms which the dance allowed me, and the air of visible satisfaction in both our eyes, flushed the face of Namouna with a resentment she could ill conceal. The colour glowed in her cheeks,  
and

and anger flashed from her eye; even Selima remarked to me her jealousy, with that distant insinuation, which shewed her latent apprehension of my constancy.

I never danced in my life with more spirit: the singularity of our different dresses, the beauty of the saloon, and the vivacity of Selima gave wings to my steps. Namouna complimented us with a forced and overdone civility, which ill disguised the feelings of her mind.

Benridden, on his part, was in raptures; he uttered nonsense with a volubility unrestrained; and he seemed to have forgot every thing, but that he was for that hour master of the castle. Our performance had so much diverted him, that he resolved himself to attempt to perform with the dancers, and the slaves applauded his motions with repeated shouts of satisfaction; which was not a little augmented by his trampling on the robe of state: a robe, at the sight of which they had used to tremble; and

and the eye of whose wearer would have bent them to the dust.

Benridden soon found himself warm with his exertions; and ordering the dancers to retire, he proposed that we should enter the recess, and partake of the collation and wines.

The supper room was beautifully lighted; and, by the reflection of the mirrors, appeared to contain a thousand people, whose various figures were seen on all sides. Benridden, with an impudence of which he was master, took his seat at the head of the table, and the company ranged themselves on each side of him, highly entertained with his jests.

The finest fruits, preserved and fresh, arose in piles from dishes of porcelain and glass. Sherbet and variety of wines were served in golden goblets; and the greatest profusion, even to extravagance, took place:—it was truly a feast of slaves.

Namouna sat opposite Selima and I.

She



She was attended by her own female slave, whom she would not permit to sit at the table, and to whom she from time to time whispered her commands. "Go, my dear," said she aloud, "bring me that bottle of Persian wine, the Bashaw and I used to drink together;—he is now no more, and my friends shall drink to his memory."

I did not altogether admire the turn of her eye, but yet I had no suspicion; and pouring out a glass of the black wine of Jerusalem, which stood before me, I begged her to pledge me. She took the cup from me, and drank it off with eagerness.

The wine she had sent for being come, she began leisurely to pour it out—it was strongly perfumed. "Come," said she, with a gay air, "Selima, the Fair, take this cup; and drink to your Spaniard's health." She arose, leaning a little over the table to present the cup to Selima, who, in her turn, rose and reached out her hand to take it.

A malicious glance from the eyes of Namouna, which seemed to sparkle with triumph, flashed upon me with increased suspicion. The unfortunate fate of the beautiful Zara started to my remembrance, and I half rose to catch the cup from the hand of Selima, who was raising it to her lips.

The eye of Namouna caught my motion; her face became a deadly pale, and the blood forsook her lips.

“Nay then,” cried she, “this shall suffice!”

She grasped a dagger in her hand, which she raised to strike, at the instant that my hand touched that of Selima, which was lifted to her lip—At the same moment I grasped my sabre, to interpose its glittering blade—when the shrill sound of a trumpet transfixed us in new consternation, and destroyed in one moment all the gaiety and spirits of the company.

Every person was suspended in horror,  
and

and seemed deprived of action by the immediate spell of enchantment. The arm of Namouna remained raised, and I had not power to draw my sabre.

A second blast, which reverberated harshly through the castle, threw the whole company into unspeakable confusion. An universal uproar, and cry of terror, filled the saloon; and those who were not too much frightened to fly, hastened to hide themselves in darkness.

The guilty cup fell from the hand of Selima. A chilly langour overspread her face, and she sunk into my arms; pronouncing, "We are lost, dear Fernando! the Bashaw comes!"

The trumpet a third time sounded, and the great drum beat with vehemence. Namouna no longer thought of revenge from her own hands—her spirit had recovered from its first alarm. "Now," cried she, "thou shalt see, base Christian! that a child shall not be preferred to me."



With these words she quitted the table, advancing to the great saloon. The other ladies fainted away; and Benridden became delirious with fear—pouring wine so fast down his throat, that he fell lifeless upon the sofa.

Selima lay in my arms without motion; and the excessive paleness of her face, made me fear she was gone too far to recover. I knew not how to act; I was distracted at the frustration of our flight. I cursed, in the bitterness of my wrath, the folly of Benridden; but for whose whims we might have been far from the castle: and I trembled with various fears when I heard the approach of the Bashaw, who entered the saloon in anger and amazement, attended by a number of guards.

His rage at the extraordinary scene before him, held him silent; while Namouna spoke with eagerness and passion.

“ See, my Lord, the riot and disorder  
in

in your absence! See this Spaniard who has polluted the sacred chambers of your retirement! He came here boasting that he had slain you in battle: and since his arrival, the castle has been filled with riot and excess. He has bribed your slave Benridden—he has offered violence to me—and behold, my Lord, your slave Selima in his arms.”

The Bashaw drew near, grinding his teeth with madness; while every slave shrunk, mute and trembling, behind the pillars.

“ My Lord,” said I, as he advanced, “ you have returned at a time when you find your castle in confusion; but that you should impute to the belief that you had fallen gloriously in battle.”

He stamped upon the ground, with a sudden motion which startled me.—  
 “ Wretch!” cried he, laying his hand upon a poniard he wore in his girdle,  
 “ Dare you palliate crimes such as meet my eyes! How came you into this sa-

loon?—How came you into company with these ladies? Die!—My arm shall revenge me!”

He drew near with a quick step, and raised his weapon to strike. I endeavoured to draw my sabre, but it was entangled in the robes of Selima; and in the urgency of the moment, I had recourse to the fatal dagger, which I constantly wore in my breast. I stretched out my right arm with this weapon, while my left encircled the yet lifeless body of Selima.

Hali paused—“Ha!” said he, “I know him.—’Tis the man who had nearly slain me in the field! Guards! seize him, and drag him to the deepest dungeon of the castle.”

I was surrounded in a moment, and several scimitars and pikes glittered around me. I trembled lest Selima might be wounded if I attempted resistance: what resistance indeed would have been effectual in such a situation. My arms were quickly pinioned,  
and



and Selima, the tender Selima, rudely seized by two savage soldiers.

“ Bear her hence !” cried Hali : “ give her to the women ; and, I swear by Mahomet ! dead or alive she shall this night be mine !”

“ Monsters !” cried I, struggling fiercely, “ release me, that I may revenge this outrage on all that women call lovely ! Hali ! if you are a man and a soldier, I challenge your humanity and your honour not thus to deal with your enemy. — The words of Namouna are utterly false—Selima is virtuous.”

“ Away ! away !” cried he, “ bear him hence ! Let all these women be dragged to their apartments ; to-morrow they shall be sold for slaves : and Selima, after I have sated my revenge, shall perform the meanest offices of drudgery.”

My soul was agitated to despair. A blaze of frenzy rushed through my burning brain ; and I became endowed with gigantic strength.

Selima was rudely carried away by two barbarous ruffians; her torn dress trailed upon the ground. Half the tapers were extinguished or broken by the frightened slaves: and the saloon, lately so gaudy, now appeared as if taken by storm, and delivered to plunder and devastation.

I started, I struggled, and tore myself from the arms of the guards. I flew at Hali, with my lifted dagger, and should have killed him on the spot, had not Namouna thrown herself upon me with the weapon she yet held in her hand. I avoided her blow; and she received in her breast the dagger I had raised to destroy Hali.

Again I became a prisoner, the weapon remaining in her bleeding bosom. Agony tortured every feeling of my soul. I shuddered at the unintentional murder. I beheld her crimson cheeks pale, and distorted in the agonies of convulsive death. I turned my face away with horror—I beheld the Bashaw following the lifeless Selima;

Selima ; and sickness spread over my frame. An heavy dampness hung upon me ; my eyes were set in clouds ; the tapers disappeared ; and I remained unconscious of existence.



CHAP. V.

And how unhurt to tread the burning way,  
Where blinding sands in circling eddies play.

ON recovering, I found myself in a place where no ray of light broke upon my sight. I breathed with difficulty, and found myself too weak to stand. An heavy chain round my body fixed me close to a wall, preventing my moving the distance of two steps: obliging me to remain wholly uncertain of my situation, and totally incapable of attempting to escape.

The remembrance of Selima almost deprived me a second time of sensation. "O!" cried I, gnashing my teeth, "Selima! Selima! where art thou?"

The long avenues returned in faint echoes the name of Selima, and left me again to the dreariness of silence and darkness. The air was damp, and hot almost to suffocation; and my groans seemed to return upon me from a long distance. As I had not the power of motion, I could only trace my dungeon in thought. I wondered that the hurry and confusion of the castle did not reach me; and I judged thence, that I was deep in the bowels of the earth.

Like a child which exhausts its strength in passion, I called on the name of Selima, and uttered execrations against the Bashaw, till I became calm. A dead solemnity overspread my mind. I wondered that Hali so long delayed to satisfy his anger: and I could only impute it to the heart-rending reflection, that Selima was yet in his power.

I leaned back my head against the damp wall; my temples beating with violence. A distant and hollow sound reached my ears,

ears, and wakened my attention. I opened my eyes, in expectation of beholding the Balhaw, followed by his officers; and I fancied my death approaching.

I waited without apprehension. A steady composure overspread my mind. I felt as a man who knows he must undergo some painful operation; who knows it is for his welfare, and yet wishes it over. I heard a slow footstep distinctly advance in the dark. It seemed to come through a long passage—I found my resolution not immoveable—I trembled as I sat.

“What is this,” thought I, “that comes upon me in the darkness of night? Is death inflicted in this country with the superadded horrors of imagination, which infinitely surpass all the preparations of reality?”

These reflections passed rapidly through my mind; and the footsteps drew near which were to assure me of the terrible certainty.

“Who comes?” said I faintly; but no answer



answer was returned: and I closed my eyes, expecting every moment the stroke of death.

A sudden sound at a distance caused me to look up. A glaring light flamed along the vaulted passage, and rapidly advanced, while a loud voice called the person before me to stop.

I beheld the danger to which I had been exposed with a shudder of fear. A black slave, with no other dress than a blue cotton shirt, tied round his waist, held a battle-axe in his hand.—His countenance was fierce and fiery; and he seemed disappointed that he had not effected his purpose.

A person approached with a torch, whose features I could not distinctly perceive. "Stay," cried he to the slave; "stay, till I ask this wretch a question."

The sound of his voice seemed known to my ear. "Raise your axe," continued he, "strike him to the center, if he does not answer the questions I shall ask!"

Then

Then turning to me—"Tell me, base wretch! how you came in possession of this dagger?"

"That dagger," replied I, "came into my hands in a way singular and mysterious."

"Who is it that speaks?" demanded he. "What voice do I hear?"

Then holding the torch nearer my face "Ha!" exclaimed he, "Fernando de Coello, is it you I behold?—You, the man I had feared had been murdered."

"Is it Mustapha whom I see in these dungeons?" cried I, astonished. "How have you gained this subterranean prison?—Tell me, where is Selima?"

"She is with the Bashaw," answered he; "you must accompany me thither."

"Never!" cried I: "strike!—I ask it as a favour of friendship."

"Unlock his chains," said Mustapha, with a smile—"I know better what is due to friendship."

The slave unlocked my fetters.—"Follow

low me," said Mustapha, advancing with the torch; "I will procure your liberty, in recompense for my own."

"Liberty!" murmured I, "what is liberty without Selima?—what is life itself without her? Mustapha, you know the picture of your long lost sister?—Selima is the resemblance of that picture.—I conjure you, by the name of your sister, to free her from the Bashaw's power."

"Trust to destiny," replied he; "Selima is the property of the Bashaw."

A black and winding way ascended into the body of the castle. I seemed to be in a sort of dream, as I passed through various chambers, and entered on that suit of rooms where I had first seen Selima. We entered the last chamber, where the distant dawn of day shed its tranquil light through the lattice, and a fine perfume from the garden breathed peace to the senses. But these had no charm for my soul. All my faculties were agonized at the sight of Selima sitting quietly on a sofa with the Bashaw,



Bashaw, and leaning her head on his shoulder.

I stood transfixed to the floor. She raised her eyes towards me, sparkling amidst trickling tears. — A deep blush spread over her cheeks—She smiled, but remained silent. Hali gazed upon her with pleasure: then turned his eyes towards me, with a mixture of curiosity and anger, examining my figure with a penetrating look.

“Young man,” said he, in a tone meant to inspire confidence, “Selima has just been saying many things in your favour. I am witness of your gallantry in battle; and cannot suppose you guilty of the murder Mustapha suspected. Selima has asked your liberty, and I will not deny her first request.”

I found my bosom swell with its wrongs, I darted a look of reproach upon Selima. “No,” cried I, agitated with a tumult of passion—“no, my Lord, I will not owe my life to the intercession of her, whom I  
now

now behold fallen from the pride of independent virtue! No! since I have lost her, life is a poor, an insignificant gift, and I will not take it at her hands."

My passion arose almost to choaking.— I was overcome at once with recollections of tenderness, and a view of all that I had lost.

"Quit the room," said Mustapha to a slave who stood in waiting. Then turning to me, "Be seated, I entreat," said he, "and calm those transports. This night has been a night of wonderful discovery. Fate has been unravelling mysteries; and circumstances the most gloomy have produced effects the most pleasing. That is the Bashaw Hyraddin Hali, my brother, and the brother of Lady Zidana. That is Selima, the daughter of our long lost sister: and this is Fernando de Coello, my friend and preserver!"

I gasped for breath at these words: it was a flush of joy which crowded on my senses with insufferable transport, and I  
funk

sunk for a moment into the arms of Mustapha. Selima was not to be restrained by the presence of her uncles; she rushed forward, and taking my hand, pressed it to her fluttering bosom — her angel voice called me to life.

Words were inexpressive of our feelings. — We gazed upon each other with pleasure; for the short sentence of Mustapha had made us mutually acquainted: and the innocence of Selima, seemed like a pleasing message from heaven, tranquillizing every other care.

I learnt that Mustapha had found his brother in the midst of battle, when his presence was necessary to save him from the sword of a Spaniard, who would have cloven his head. It was after this piece of service, he ventured to explain to him the tragical fate of Zara. Hyraddin Hali was overcome with sorrow at his loss: and having no longer any one to inherit his possessions, he resolved to retire from busy  
life,



life, and pass the rest of his days in his castle.

The strange confusion that presented to his eyes, raised his anger beyond controul. The words of Namouna had touched him nearly ; and he resolved to be refused no longer by a slave, whose features and manner had made a strong impression upon his heart. The slaves who dragged away Selima, insensible as she was, placed her upon a couch, retiring when Hali entered.

He approached her, with every passion in a rage. Her disordered veil discovered her pale and disfigured features ; and for a moment he believed her actually dead. He stooped down to be certain, and his eyes were attracted by the necklace of pearl and gold. He started with horror, as a thousand ideas and recollections rushed upon his mind. He called aloud for her attendants ; and before she was sensible of the violence he had meditated, she opened her eyes, to be received into his arms as a niece, and acknowledged relation.

Mustapha

Mustapha confirmed his brother in the certainty of the necklace, which had been a present to Lady Zidana, for the little Selima, the day of her birth.

After this relation, Mustapha informed me, that Almonzer was gone to his castle to bring Lady Zidana to her brothers. That he had been employed by Don Padilla as an instrument of destruction; having received a considerable sum to murder Lady Zidana: but being touched with remorse, and a sentiment of love for her beauty, he had spread a report of her being drowned in a party of pleasure; in which Don Padilla had the satisfaction to suppose that his instrument also had perished.

Almonzer passed over to Barbary; but being unable to prevail on the virtue of Lady Zidana, he kept her for many years in confinement, at a lonely castle on the sea-shore: while himself, by his knowledge of men and society, acquired considerable riches in the pay of his government.

After these relations, we partook in a  
repast;

repast; and though the sun was arisen, it was necessary to seek some refreshment for exhausted nature. I could scarcely credit my senses at this singular turn of fortune; and I feared the success of my desires, when I reflected on the vast distance wealth would place between us.

It was evening when I awoke; Mustapha and Hali sent for me into the garden, where they sat in the Temple of Pleasure to enjoy the coolness. I partook of their repast; and at their request related all that had befallen me:—beginning with my first interview with that strange appearance, which had accosted me as a wounded soldier, and which I believed to be the troubled spirit of Count Ferendez.

They were not a little astonished at my relation, and I gained considerably in their esteem; but that I was a Spaniard, and a relation of Don Padilla was far from being a recommendation.

The customs of the East deny the company of women to men, who are not nearly related;



related; and I found no opportunity of conversing with Selima, but when she could steal unobserved to the grove where we plighted our vows. I waited with anxious expectation for the arrival of Almonzer and Lady Zidana; under the faint hope, that their interest might have weight in my favour — when all my expectations were blasted, by a proposal made by Mustapha.

“Your passion for my niece, Selima,” said he, one day to me, as we sat by the side of the fountain in the garden, “is not unknown to me or Hyraddin. We acknowledge your merits — But place yourself, my friend, in our situation, and ask, if possessing only one relation to inherit your wealth, you would willingly give her to a stranger? You cannot blame us in being unwilling to do so: but we propose to you a thing easy, and such as, if you are wise, you will not fail to accept.

“Hyraddin, I have told you, had once two children; the eldest, a son, named  
Ali,

Ali, who ran away about three years since, and has never once been heard of: the second was the unfortunate Zara, whose spirit of adventure was equal to her brother's. Hyraddin being thus without children, will adopt you for his son provided you will profess the true faith of Mahomet: without this, he can never bestow on you the person of his niece."

This proposal almost deprived me of life; and it was a long time before I had power to reply. At length I answered:

"Mustapha, since you first knew me, did you ever know me guilty of a dishonourable action? Did I ever change my opinion for convenience? or say one day, what I would not stand to the next? I am a soldier, a Spaniard, and a gentleman; as such, no worldly motive, however powerful, can make me break the faith I have pledged to my country and Creator. The opinion I have imbibed in my youth, shall descend with me to the grave; and you, as a man of honour, will answer in your own breast

breast to the resolution my situation enforces upon me."

We parted mutually dissatisfied; and again I began to entertain thoughts of secret flight, upon which I meditated till the arrival of Almonzer and Lady Zidana.

This lady, having been early used to the customs of Spain, did not possess that distant reserve so peculiar to Asia. She acknowledged me as a sort of nephew; and delighted to hear me talk of Grenada, and her native plains. At the distance of twenty years, she had not forgotten the landscapes that charmed her in youth; and she suppressed a sigh, at my description of the ruined situation of the Moorish castle.

There yet remained in her person an outline, which brought the original to remembrance: and when I compared her to the whole-length likeness in the picture-gallery of the Castle of Montillo, a train of saddening reflections stole gradually over my mind; the decay of mortality



placed the transience of human life in full view.

“ If then so short be our existence,” said I to myself, “ how worse than foolish to suffer trifles to intercept the small portion of felicity we might partake.”

I had no opportunity to lay my claims in person before Lady Zidana; I therefore ventured to disclose my schemes to Almonzer. He smiled at my folly, as he called it.—“ What,” said he, “ can you offer to these relations of Selima as equivalent? or how will you carry her away from a castle like this, two days journey across the desert to Ceuta?”

I was startled at this fact, and remained silent.

“ You are a young man,” said he; “ perhaps you have yet to learn, that in pursuit of our own passions, we must flatter those of others. Revenge is nearly as paramount as love. You shall pledge yourself to bring Don Padilla to justice; and to claim from him, in behalf of their

sister, the estate in Grenada. No doubt your proposal will be accepted; and Lady Zidana, who has an ardent desire of revisiting Spain shall accompany us."

"Promise what you will," said I, "you shall not find me tardy in the performance; give me but Selima, and take the world besides."

Almonzer smiled, and left me.

I shall not describe to you the cruel agitation of my mind, while these proposals were undecided.—It is sufficient to say, that, after many struggles, and the delay of many weeks, Hyraddin at last consented to give me his niece. Probably he feared that if he finally refused, he should be the means of her death; for the uncertainty she as well as myself endured, preyed upon her spirits, and withered the roses on her cheeks.

After I had been made happy with a concession I had no right to expect; he requested that we should remain a month at his castle before our departure to Ceuta.

The

The month was expired within a few days ; conveniences were provided for the ladies ; and our escort named—when Hy-raddin remembered, that in two days the Ramadin would begin, when travelling is not allowed for pleasure : and thus I saw myself condemned to remain another month ; which being passed without the usual amusements, appeared to me the most tedious time of my whole life. I was obliged also, out of decency and respect, to submit to this long fast—much more severe than our Lent in Europe.

I saw the month expire with joy—I resolved to leave no exertion wanting. I saw all our equipage in readiness ; and had all our servants in waiting in the courtyard. Mustapha, possibly with a view to strike me with a greater idea of their magnificence, caused all the slaves to muster in military array ; and the musicians of the castle performed several Eastern marches ; in which the loud-sounding gong of India was introduced with astonishing effect, its



deep vibrations penetrating through every chamber of the castle.

We took leave of Hyraddin and Muf-tapha, who were touched with regret at our departure; and we paid our respects, by signs, to Zulma, whom I had never seen, and who witnessed our little procession through a latticed window.

My heart bounded with the exultation of a conqueror, when we had passed the draw-bridge and began to enter the desert. I took the command of the party; and in apprehension that a message might overtake us while we remained in sight, I caused the little band to move forward at a round trot; and in a few hours the castle appeared only a speck at the edge of a long track of sandy desert.

We arrived the next day at Ceuta; having procured a pass from Hyraddin. I was generally believed to be dead; and my troops from emulation had so considerably suffered, that their remains had been sent

to

to Spain to recruit in strength as well as numbers.

I clasped Selima to my arms with a transport of indescribable joy. She was now mine, almost beyond the reach of fortune; and, as soon as the rites of the church would permit, we pledged our faith upon the sacred altar, and in the sight of Him, who, by creating difference of sex, has tacitly commanded this solemn institution.

The little fort and town of Ceuta was extremely crowded by the numbers of fresh troops from Spain; and being myself as a private man, I had with difficulty procured a little house for our family, that we might not be interrupted by the impertinance or curiosity of strangers. To this house I conducted my bride; and we sat down to a small feast, with hearts united by love and friendship.

I had attained the summit of my wishes in the possession of Selima; and I exulted in the certainty, that I was now above the

powers of chance, and out of the reach of reverſive fortune.

Selima retired with her female ſlave to her chamber: it was eleven o'clock—and, after waiting half an hour till the ſlave returned, I left the company of Almonzer and Lady Zidana, who immediately retired to their ſeveral apartments.

It is now I am going to relate to you the moſt cruel incident that ever beſel me.

Winged with impatience, I flew to the chamber of my lovely bride. I opened the door, and was paſſied through every limb with a ſight of horror. I beheld, ſeated upon the frame of the bed, the ſame figure I had ſeen in the Caſtle of Montillo, which led me into its ſepulchral labyrinth—The ſame ſpectre which, habituated as a ſoldier, had firſt ſtopped me in the deſile. Animated death was impreſſed upon his terrific countenance; his eyes fixed upon me, with a look which chilled my ſpirits as they flowed.

An half-uttered groan eſcaped my breaſt,

as



as I sat down speechless upon an opposite seat, and continued to gaze on the strange form of this phantom, through the dim light which one glimmering taper emitted.

It is impossible to describe the sensations of the mind, at an interview with a visible, yet impalpable, and supernatural being.— A being unconnected with any class of existences that are familiar to our senses; and which fills the thinking faculty of man with so much mingled wonder and terror, that the mind becomes more bewildered, the more we attempt to reason and reflect.

Transfixed as I was with the unexpected appearance of this fearful guest, I turned my eyes with a cautious motion towards the bed where Selima lay, apparently in a profound sleep; which in some measure relieved my apprehensions on her account.

The spectre still followed the motions of my eye, observing a profound and awful silence; which I knew not how to interrupt, and could scarcely endure. It

moved not from where it sat, till twelve struck upon the garrison clock : then slowly rising, it stood between me and Selima, making a sign that I should depart.

I arose at his motion, but I was not willing to obey the intimation ; it seemed shocking to leave Selima alone with this dread being in the room. I stood still. He frowned angrily upon me ; and slowly opening his dark cloak, disclosed to me those wounds, which to my shrinking sight seemed to bleed afresh.

I shuddered at the sight ; I remembered but too well the engagements under which I was bound. I bowed in obedience, and unwillingly quitted the room, a prey to the most distracting inquietude ; and cast in one hour from all the æreal flights of fancied bliss. I saw that difficulties yet remained to be overcome, and the severest of all trials to be withstood, ere Selima could be other than nominally mine.

I sat down in my own chamber, for sleep was banished from my eyes ; and I gave myself

myself up to all the vexatious reflections my situation could suggest. Above all things it became necessary to conceal from the world and our friends this strange interposition; and it became necessary that Selima should partake in a secret that so nearly concerned her.

I was distracted with a thousand fears.— I doubted whether she would give credit to so unparalleled a tale; and I blushed at the situation in which I was placed.

“ Shall it be told,” said I to myself, “ that I retired on the night of my marriage to sit alone? At any rate I will watch over my property—I will stand guard over her slumbers.”

With a mind determined to hazard every danger, I cautiously returned. But when I had gradually opened the door, my soul sickened at the sight of her terrible guardian, sitting as he had done at first.

All my resolution vanished in a moment—I panted for breath, and sunk into a chair. There was a wild and frightful



anger shot from his eye as he gazed upon me. I endeavoured to avoid his glance, but it was impossible: my lips trembled without a sound; and closing my eyes, I dared not to raise them again upon this petrifying object. An icy chillness crept over me; and it was not till the dawning of day that life seemed to return along my veins. The spectre was no longer visible, and the streaks of morning brightened through the lattice.

It is impossible to describe the relief I experienced, all my faculties having been suspended or suppressed; and I approached the sleeping Selima, with a reverence which flowed from the sublimest feelings of love.

She yet enjoyed a tranquil sleep; and the warmth of the air gave a fine tint to her cheeks. I took her hand as I stood over her.—“Charming angel,” said I, internally, “that purity which a superior being makes his watch, it shall be my care to guard; and some time hence, when my strange engagements are fulfilled, shall it

be my reward. Yes, lovely Selima, upon this fair hand I vow, that my respect shall remain till I have tranquillized the spirit of thy father, by demanding justice for his wrongs, and laid his remains amongst those of his ancestors."

I kissed the hand I held with profound respect, and in a few minutes after she opened her eyes. "I will retire for a few moments, my dear Selima," said I; "the day has just arisen; and if you will rise also, we will take a walk to witness the majesty of nature—and then I will inform you of many things it is now necessary you should know."

## CHAP. VI.

What need of force, when every thing concurs  
To meet our wishes?

TAMERLANE.

WE remained at Ceuta till the return of the next vessel which arrived from Spain, when we embarked for Malaga; and after a pleasant voyage, I had the satisfaction to salute my bride upon her native land.

Lady Zidana experienced all the sensations of a return to a much-loved country after a long absence; when innumerable and tender remembrances crowd upon us, and fill us with a delicious and inexpressible pleasure.

Selima



Selima and I lay in one room; but I had used myself to sleep in my military watch-coat on the floor, and my habits as a soldier prevented my finding any inconvenience.

On the first night of our landing, my mind was too much employed to sleep, and Selima herself was not inclined to repose. We therefore conversed till near midnight; and the singular adventure I had been engaged in, at no great distance from this very town, became the subject of our discourse.

My description of the fine scenery bordering the Mediterranean, the inimitable effect of moonlight on the trembling waves, and the obscure landscape, excited so much her curiosity, that she proposed our going to the spot, where her cousin, the unfortunate Zara, was interred.

The night was similar to that on which I had taken my first ramble; and, after providing myself with arms, and wrapping Selima in my watch-coat, that the chill air  
might

might not affect her, who had so long been used to the burning heats of Morocco, we stole away from the house; and the guard at the gates knowing me, permitted us to pass.

Selima was delighted with the solemnity and sublimity of the scenery: the wind gently rippled over the waves; the regular motion, as they dashed on the beach, moved over the soul in secret awe. We stood hand in hand, upon a rocky part of the shore, silently occupied by our own ideas, and the infinitude which circumbounded creation. A confused murmur of distant voices aroused our attention.

I would immediately have hurried Selima from the spot, apprehensive for her safety — when a sudden cry of distress caught my ear, and aroused the feelings of a soldier. Selima partook of my feelings, and we both hastened towards the sounds. I gave Selima one of my pistols, with which she might defend herself; and being dressed

ed in appearance as a man, she had no sexual violence to fear.

I soon perceived a confused number of people on the shore, dressed like Spanish seamen. On our appearance they took to flight, leaving behind them a person who lay upon the sands. I feared that our arrival was too late. I stooped down to examine his situation, and found that he yet breathed, though he was deprived of his senses by several severe blows. I could perceive no wound, and began to entertain hopes that his life might be preserved. His dress was that of a fisherman, and I observed the sand near him to have been partly thrown up; from which I inferred, that his enemies had intended to conceal him, after executing their purpose.

Fortunately Selima had some strong essence, with which she chafed his temples; and, after some time he recovered his speech, in a broken and confused manner. His voice no sooner reached my ears, than  
I fancied



I fancied it familiar; and my interest became if possible stronger.

In the Mediterranean, as you well know, there is no tide, and the sands, when there is no storm, remain constantly dry; so that we ran no danger by sitting down, and waiting till morning might bring us assistance: meanwhile our patient recovered his faculties by degrees, and when day began to break, he was so much better as to be able to stand upon his feet.

When objects were visible, I examined with attention the features of his face: his semblance to Selima, and the tones of his voice equally struck me—a confused surmise ran through my mind.

“Are you a Spaniard?” said I: “are you in fact a fisherman?”

“I am a fisherman,” replied he, in a low voice. “I had from time to time laid by my little earnings, for a purpose I had much at heart; and to be secure, I hid it a foot deep in the sands. My comrades discovered

covered my treasure, by watching me to the spot; and, but for your assistance, no doubt would have murdered me."

"This is very natural," said I; "but you have a foreign accent, and, pardon me, I do not think you are a Spaniard?"

He appeared rather confused at these words. "Whatever I am, Senor," said he, "I have sufficient gratitude to acknowledge the favour I have received from you; in addition to which, I entreat that you will suffer me to remain here till some person of less note may come by, and conduct me to my hovel."

"Selima," said I, "this is surely some unknown brother of yours; his voice reminds me of Hyraddin Hali." This I spoke in the Moorish dialect.

He inquired, in the same tongue, if I knew Hyraddin Hali.

"He is my uncle," replied Selima.

"And I am Ali, his son," said the youth.

I was almost speechless with the pleasing surprise; and had Zara arisen from the sands,

sands, where she was buried, I could not have been more astonished.

I pretended to doubt; and inquired by what strange accident the son of a Bashaw should be metamorphosed into a poor fisherman.

"My story," said he, "is wonderful; but it is too long for my strength and my situation. I have sufficiently exhausted my desire for rambling, and the money I had treasured was to have paid for my return."

I forbore tormenting him with questions; and with much difficulty we supported him to Malaga. Lady Zidana was charmed with so providential a meeting, and undertook to attend in person the recovery of her nephew Ali.

It was here that we learnt the design of Don Padilla to become an husband, for the third time, in his old age: and it was out of compassion for the unfortunate lady, who was compelled by the avarice of her father, that we planned a scheme, which

Almonzer



Almonzer undertook to execute, with all the terrors of mystery, which he well knew how to assume.

It was a long time before Ali recovered his contusions, and was in a state of health to undertake a journey. I rejoiced in the happiness of Hyraddin; as he would now no longer regret the loss of Selima, whose only portion would be her claim to the recovery of the Grenada estates.

The day was fixed for the departure of Ali, and I had prepared several little presents for my Moorish friends; when an unpleasant circumstance involved us in fresh troubles, partly indeed arising from my own negligence.

The fishermen, who knew Ali only as one of their own class, were envious of his good fortune, in being protected by a person of some consideration; and not knowing how to revenge themselves, determined at least to plunder the little repository of his savings.

Providence

Providence had so directed that Ali had made his deposit immediately over the chest containing the body of his sister; and the fishermen, prompted by avarice, continued to dig, in hopes of further gain, till they at last reached the trunk. Their surprise and disappointment was equal, on discovering a dead body, which they immediately concluded must have been murdered by Ali; and from the rich shawl which was folded on the breast, no doubt robbed of a considerable booty. They immediately laid an information before the Magistrate, and Ali was arrested, and thrown into prison.

I applied in private to the magistrate; to whom I related the accidental manner in which I had witnessed the burial of the body near twelve months past. My sudden disappearance he well knew, as a reward had been offered for my discovery. I then repeated to him the outline of my adventures; and that my curiosity of visiting  
the

the place where so singular an accident had happened to me, was the only means of saving the life of Ali; which these fishermen now attempted by other means.

The magistrate was convinced of my sincerity, and the proofs I had produced; so that he privately gave orders to secure the fishermen, who, after some delay of office, were sentenced to the galleys, and Ali recovered his liberty.

I caused the body of Zara to be inclosed in a glass frame, and that covered with a box of curious workmanship. This melancholy present I delivered to the care of Ali; taking of him a tender leave, and wishing him a fortunate voyage to his native country.

Having no further business to detain us at Malaga, and the time of the year being delightful, when the ripening stores of nature spread profusion to the hand of man; we preferred gliding up the Darro, as less fatiguing to the ladies, and affording a greater variety of prospect.

Lady



Lady Zidana remembered only the early period of her life, when she had delighted in the gardens of Grenada, and been happy with a man she loved; and this tender recollection filled her mind with those pleasing yet painful images, which sentiment considers as the refinement of feeling.

Selima was enraptured with the prospects, and I was enraptured with Selima; thus our voyage gave us all satisfaction, and we arrived without accident within one day's sail of Grenada. It was impossible that I should forget our adventures at the Moorish tower; and as we drew near it, Lady Zidana became extremely melancholy. We could perceive its dark frowning ruins at a considerable distance, reddened by the last rays of the declining sun.

"It was in yonder tower," said I to Selima, "that I first found the portrait which fixed my fancy; and which was taken for the lady your mother."

"You never let me see that portrait,"  
said

said Lady Zidana ; “ will you favour me, Fernando ? ”

“ Now that the original is in my possession,” replied I, “ I have no value for it, but as it resembles you, Madam, at the brightest period of your life.”

Lady Zidana took the portrait; but trembling when she looked upon it, she let it drop, and striking upon the edge of the barge, it fell into the water.

I was not a little grieved at the loss; and Lady Zidana in apology imputed it to her agitation — “ Which,” said she, “ arose from remembering, that this picture belonged to the Count, my husband; who certainly never parted willingly with it. But you tell me that you found it in yonder castle.—How it could be there I am unable to imagine.”

I then informed her that we had found it in a parcel, which, no doubt, belonged to some robbers; and that we supposed they had there concealed themselves in some secret chamber; as some person had  
passed

passed us in the dark, but escaped our most vigilant scrutiny.

“ There is beneath that castle,” said Lady Zidana, “ one of the most singular caverns perhaps in the world. I remember once visiting it in company with Count Ferendez. That building was a Moorish palace, and princes have been buried beneath its lofty towers : but now, alas ! there remains only ruins ; and I have lived to see destroyed, by wanton violence, what had taken ages to build and adorn, and which it would have required ages to destroy.”

The night set in with clouds, and fearing that we might experience a storm, I proposed that we should land, and pass the time in one of the chambers of the tower ; where we could light a fire of faggots, and our numbers would be superior to danger.

This proposal, after some little debate, with fear was agreed to ; and putting the boat on shore, we secured her to the staple in the steps. I could not prevail on the ladies



ladies to proceed beyond the ground floor ; the chamber on which was so blackened with the smoke of the former flames, that its appearance was dismal in extreme, and excited a thousand unpleasing reflections.

We lighted a large fire upon the floor of dry boughs, and spreading some carpets, partook of a repast, which we mingled with wine, till our spirits were reconciled to the gloom of our situation. Almonzer and myself, well armed, agreed to watch, while our servants and the ladies should endeavour to sleep upon the carpets ; and we sat silently regarding the embers as they glowed upon the pavement, and shot at intervals a faint blaze upon the smoaky walls.

I pictured in my mind all the various transactions that had perhaps taken place in this dreary chamber. The carousals of mirth, and the outrages of violence, by turns were present to my imagination ; and I almost believed that I heard the cry of murder in the midnight breeze.

The terrors we had felt when listening to the storm arose fresh to memory, and I shuddered at the reflection. I looked round upon Selima, whom fatigue had lulled to rest, and a more pleasing train of thought entered on my mind: when my astonished senses were confounded by a sight, as strange as it was unaccountable.

I beheld in one corner of the room, where the light of our fire shed an obscure reflection, one of the flag stones of the pavement slowly rise on one side, and a man's face, half covered with a venerable beard, appear beneath it. I was too much struck with horror to speak; but grasping the arm of Almonzer, I pointed to the cause of my alarm. He had only time to be convinced that my terror was not an idle dream, before the stone closed into its place.

“What can this mean?” said Almonzer, starting on his feet: “let us examine, Fernando.”

I was

I was astonished at his coolness, which half dispelled my fears. "It is perhaps," said I, "some spirit, whose body is buried beneath that stone."

"Then I will examine the skeleton," replied he, lighting a torch. "Come, Fernando, you were not afraid of a spirit on the ramparts of Ceuta; has it a more terrible effect in the castle of Grenada?"

I was charmed with his bravery, and recovered confidence from his words. I lighted another torch, and followed to the place where we had seen this strange appearance. Almonzer stepped upon the stone, and moving from one side to the other, observed that it was loose beneath his feet, but so exactly fitting to the others, that no hold was left to raise it.

The dagger, which I constantly carried about me, was formed with three sides, and peculiarly strong. I insinuated the point between the stones, and raising it slowly till we got a firmer hold, we lifted it wholly on one side, and beheld beneath us, not a



skeleton or a grave, but a black and yawning gulph, into which the light of our torches scarce penetrated.

It now became necessary to reflect before we proceeded farther.

“It is certain,” said Almonzer, “that there is some mystery involved in this business; and as certain that I will not quit this castle till I am satisfied.—Fernando, dare you follow me?”

I smiled at this challenge.—“If there is a mystery, and in this place,” answered I, “no man has more obligation than myself to search into it—Let me, therefore, first advance.”

We refrained waking our servants, as we knew the barge-men kept watch without; and after examining to see if our pistols were properly loaded, we began to descend a narrow flight of steps, almost perpendicular, and built in the form of those leading up a circular tower.

So far did they penetrate into the earth, that they seemed without end; and were the

the more perplexing as we could not see a yard before us. We frequently listened, but not the smallest noise reached us; and when we reflected on the singularity of the place, even Almonzer began to doubt whether the figure we had seen was human.

After descending at least three hundred steps in an almost perpendicular direction, we entered at once into the most beautiful grotto which fancy could paint. From the reflection of the two torches that we carried, a blaze of light burst upon us, which, for a moment, started us, as though we had plunged into a region of fire.

Figure to yourself a prodigious dome, whose height was alone sufficiently grand to excite admiration; from thence depended stalactites of all the varied colours that glitter in the prism. The sides and natural columns, which swelled of different heights, were of the most beautiful spar, tinted with streams of gold; the ground was sprinkled with little pieces, as if strewed with variety of gems.

The effect this brilliant assemblage of crystallized forms had upon the mind is without description; and we stood for some time in pleasing astonishment and wonder, wholly forgetful of the cause which led us thither.

It appeared like the treasury of nature; where topazes clustered with emeralds, and amethysts mingled with beaming rubies, in various festoons and fancied wreathings. How infinitely less appeared now to my recollection the utmost splendor of the Celestial Saloon, that was elegantly beautiful—but this was magnificently sublime.

Our time did not permit us to remain long in this palace of jewels, we crossed to a passage which appeared on the opposite side. It was narrow, and had the appearance of having at least been enlarged by the chissel. Through this we passed about twenty paces, which led us to another descent of marble steps, conducting

us



us into a place, which at once obliterated the splendors we had just beheld.

It was a large cavern; the walls of which were of black and polished marble, in which, as in a dark mirror, the torches gleamed with a melancholy reflection. In niches, on either side, were plain marble coffins, inscribed with Moorish characters, and containing the mouldering remains of deceased nobility. Death seemed here to repose in state; and the folly of all human grandeur was impressed upon the mind, with a language morality can never teach, and devotion itself but feebly inspire.

We paused in solemn silence, as we looked round this mansion of departed grandeur. I seemed to shrink within myself: and a sigh escaped me at remembering, that I—I, who stood musing on the fate of others, should, like them, be mingled with the dust.

Almonzer made similar reflections; he looked round on this solemn mausoleum

with reverence, and we forgot for a time our situation and pursuit.

From this state of sad reflections, we were aroused by a distant sound of music, which floated along the arched vaulting of this wonderful place.

“ I have heard,” said I, “ a chorus of ærial spirits; and probably this is a symphony of subterranean beings.”

Almonzer smiled, and we slowly advanced. We had not proceeded many yards from this asylum of death, before we clearly distinguished that the sounds proceeded from an organ, accompanied in the *Te Deum* by a very fine voice, which, in this far-sounding cavity had an effect altogether singular.

“ This is certainly enchantment,” said I; “ at least we have nothing to fear: for were robbers the inhabitants of this extensive cavern, they would have little taste for the harmonising sounds of music.”

We proceeded with caution, that we might  
not

not interrupt the musician; and quickly found ourselves at the entrance of a spacious chamber, lighted with near a dozen lamps, and decorated in a style which struck us with surprise.

The furniture was that of ancient times; but what attracted our regard from the novelty of the place, was a lady, dressed in mourning robes, playing upon an organ, whose full tones had an effect astonishingly grand.

The flame of our torches could not be concealed. She suddenly ceased to play, and turning round, started up with surprise at the sight of two strangers.

“Heavens!” exclaimed Almonzer, “am I deceived?—Do I see Lady Emira?”

“Lady Emira!” repeated I, struck with the faint resemblance this lady had to the picture in the Castle of Montillo—  
“Can it be possible?”

“Who,” said she, in a firm voice, “is it that remembers me? I think the voice has once been known to me, but time has



rendered my memory treacherous. Why are you come? and how came you, Cavaliers, into this place, so distant from the knowledge of man?"

"Providence," answered I, "could alone have conducted us. This, lady, is Almonzer, once the servant of Don Padilla."

Her countenance changed at the name.

"Are you then sent hither by Padilla?" said she, in a faltering voice.—"I wondered indeed that he came not himself."

"No," replied I, "be under no apprehension from us.—I am Fernando de Coello, your nephew."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed she, giving way to tears, "I thank thee! Then I shall once more behold the light of the sun—once more breath the pure air of the day, and again behold human beings."

"Assuredly so," said Almonzer.—  
 "You are at liberty from this hour—we will conduct and protect you.—But how is it possible you could have resided in  
 this

this place for more than twenty years?—How do you procure sustenance?—or is there some other outlet into the country?”

“ There is some secret passage,” returned she, “ but where I know not; as Don Padilla always preserved it from our knowledge. Pedro, the old steward at the Castle of Montillo, and Teresa, my waiting maid, have been the condemned companions of my imprisonment, for having by accident discovered that a wax figure was buried in my place; and that I lived a prisoner in the Eastern chambers of Montillo castle, until it was convenient to convey me secretly to this cavern.”

While Lady Emira yet spoke, Teresa entered, with a basket of preserved fruits and cakes. She was terrified at our presence, and was hurrying away, when the voice of her lady encouraged her to stay, by an assurance of safety, and an enquiry after Pedro.

“ He is not yet recovered from his fright,” answered Teresa, trembling her-

self. " He was in hopes of discovering some passage out of this place, that we might not be starved by the neglect of Don Padilla's yearly visit. He had found a way, my Lady, beyond the grotto, up a long winding stair, which was finished by a trap door, made of a large flat stone: this he raised with a great deal of difficulty, and immediately let fall again, on the sight of a company of robbers, some sitting and some sleeping round a large fire upon the floor. He returned without staying to look behind him; and he was afraid of alarming your ladyship, till his own fright should be over."

I smiled at this tale of Teresa, which I explained; and desired that this venerable servant, whose silver hairs and snow-white beard had so alarmed me, might appear. Teresa soon brought him before us, and we became mutually acquainted—laughing at our various apprehensions.

" There seems nothing wanting," said Almonzer, " but light and liberty, to be perfectly



perfectly accommodated—This is a subterranean palace.”

“ And that no mean one,” said Lady Emira : “ there are apartments which, if well lighted, would put out of countenance those upon the surface of the earth. The former kings of Grenada used frequently to reside in them during the heats of summer ; but the fountains which then flowed, now only supply a small stream, and the records of its beauty have been long lost.—All its magnificence, in my girlish days, had dwindled in description to tales of dungeons and vaults, where the greatest cruelties had been committed.”

I inquired if she recollected that she had a daughter, and proposed that she should accompany us ; fearing we might be missed by our company, who would be in consternation at our sudden departure.

She informed us, that Padilla had once or twice spoken of the elegant form of Virginia in his annual visits ; and that the desire of seeing her daughter, was almost  
the

the only wish she had to revisit the world : for strange as it might appear, what at first she had considered as the most cruel of imprisonments, long habit, if it had not endeared, had at least reconciled.

It required some degree of resolution to resolve at once upon leaving this habitation ; and, but for my impatience to depart, many hours would have been spent in preparation. So quickly had the time passed away during our researches, and first conversation on so strange a discovery, that the day was already dawned when we reached the chamber, where our friends remained as we had left them.

I awoke the ladies, and introduced them to this unexpected stranger ; leaving till a future period, an explanation, which must be mutually embarrassing, and would have produced inveterate rivalry, had not the object of contention long since forfeited all claims upon the heart of either.

We spent the greatest part of that day in examining the curiosities of this wonderful  
ful

ful cavern; which I judged to have been originally the work of the Goths, from the ornamental fret work, cut in places in the living rock.—But as we shall probably one day visit it together, I shall now pass over a further description.

Our train was, by this accession, considerably increased; and it became necessary, on our arrival at Grenada, to hire a whole house for our accommodation. My impatience to reach Madrid, where I learned Don Padilla was gone, obliged me to leave many arrangements to Almonzer; and it was not the least singular of my adventures, that I should arrive there at so critical a moment, and become the witness of an event so unfortunate.

Thus Fernando de Coello concluded his narrative; and the Marquis of Denia, after congratulating him on the fortunate issue of so singular a concatenation of incidents, adverted to the then posture of their  
affairs,



affairs, the illness of Virginia, and the unhappy confinement of Antonio and Valedia.

The day had broke upon the long narrative of Fernando; and, on enquiry, finding Virginia enjoyed a tranquillizing sleep, the two friends retired to take a few hours necessary repose.

CHAP. VII.

Oft have I heard, that grief softens the mind,  
And makes it fearful and degenerate ;  
Think therefore on revenge, and cease to weep.—  
But who can cease to weep and look on this ?

SHAKESPEARE.

AS soon as the Marquis of Denia awoke, he sent for Raolo to inquire after Berenice; and was not a little surpris'd when that faithful servant enter'd, very much disturb'd in his manner, and with a wildness in his countenance, which was not easily accounted for.

“ What is the matter, Raolo ? ” cried he. — Where is your charge ? — Sure you have not suffer'd her to escape ? ”

“ St.

" St. Peter protect us !" replied Raolo, bowing—" She is gone, Senor, where she will be rewarded for all her evil deeds."

" I am sorry for it," replied the Marquis; " I had a thousand questions of importance to ask, which will now never be answered. Go, and bring me the picture which hangs about her neck."

" She has taken it with her," answered Raolo.

" Taken it with her !" repeated the Marquis. — " Did you not say she was dead? You have been negligent on your post, Raolo, and let her escape."

" Her master came for her," said Raolo, looking fearfully round.

" How?" cried the Marquis, starting up—" Has Don Padilla been here? — Did he dare——? But no, that was impossible, he is safe in the Inquisition—that will not excuse you, Raolo. I charge you on your fidelity, to inform me quickly what has happened to Berenice; and how she



she was suffered to quit my house so strangely?"

"Strange enough it was!" replied Raolo. "Poor wretch!—I shall never forget the agony she was in while I live? I should have called you, Senor, but you were locked in with his Excellenza Fernando; and I knew brother foldiers love to relate old stories."

"Go strait forward without profling," said the Marquis; "you raise curiosity with trifles. — I have not much time to spare."

"When that old witch was delivered over to my care," said Raolo, "I gave her a dry comfortable suit of clothes, and some refreshment, and locked her up safe in the house-keeper's great room, that she might not escape to do any mischief in the night.

" 'Now,' thought I to myself, 'my lord and his friend are talking about former times, over a good bottle of wine, and why should not I, their servant, be thinking

thinking them over by myself and a glass of Malaga?' So, your Excellenza, I sat down in my own room, intending to be ready if any thing should be wanted. I was obliged to break off a long train of reflections on the jolly time when we lay in camp, by a loud rap at the outer gate. 'Who can it be,' thought I, 'at so unseasonable an hour?'

" I waited for the porter to open the gate, but he was safe asleep; and just as I reached the hall, the clock struck twelve. 'Very well,' said I to myself, 'this is a fine hour to expect entrance into an house like this—Knock again.' Just as I pronounced these words, there was another rap at the gate. 'Diabola!' said I, 'they will disturb my lady, and interrupt my matter, so I'll see whether its a ghost, or a traveller abroad at this hour.—

" 'Who's there?' said I, through the grating.

" 'I bear a message for a lady,' replied a gruff voice; 'I must speak to her.'

" 'To

“ ‘ To who ? ’ demanded I.

“ ‘ To Berenice,’ replied the voice.—  
‘ I have a message of importance—open  
the gate !’

“ I considered that he was but one, and  
that if he should attempt to be outrageous,  
I could easily bring upon him two Cava-  
liers, who feared neither man nor devil in  
an honourable way—so I opened the door.  
A black man immediately entered the hall :  
I trembled while I closed and bolted the  
gate.

“ ‘ Go,’ said he, ‘ to Berenice ; tell her  
I have a message to deliver, which she alone  
must hear.’

“ He scowled at me with his fierce eyes  
as he spoke ; and I dared not to disobey  
him, though I felt shocked at his presence.

“ I ran to the housekeeper’s room, and  
unlocking the door, found Berenice dressed  
in the clothes I had given her, and kneel-  
ing upon the ground, with her face upon a  
chair.

“ ‘ Madam,’



“ ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘here is a black man demands to speak with you.’ ”

“ ‘With me?’ cried she wildly, starting up, while her eyes stared so, she seemed going out of her senses.

“ ‘Yes, with you,’ answered I: ‘shall I bring him up?’

“ ‘O! no, no, no,’ repeated she, agitated—‘Dear Raolo, I beseech you tell him I cannot come. How did he look?—was he angry?’

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied I, ‘ he looked terrible : he is almost seven feet high, and looks as I never saw man look.’ ”

“ ‘ I am lost, lost to eternity!’ cried she, clasping her hands in despair. ‘ O! why did Fernando prevent my purpose! Tell him I will not—cannot come.’ ”

“ I went down, shuddering at the thought of again speaking to this fierce black ; but when I delivered her refusal, he smiled with a malignity, which made my heart beat in my breast.

“ ‘ If she will not come to me, I will go to her,’ said he.—‘Thinks she to elude my power!’

“ He strode through the hall, as if he had been familiar in the house; went on to the housekeeper’s room; while I followed in trembling apprehension, and so much taken up in what was passing, that I had no idea of calling for help.”

“ That is your best apology,” said the Marquis: “ but proceed in your strange tale.”

“ Berenice lay upon the floor, with her face to the ground, and her hair flowing loose.

“ ‘ Rise!’ said he, in an imperious voice—‘ Am not I thy master, thy lord, and emperor, and darest thou insignificant slave disobey my commands?’

“ The poor wretch (for I pitied her your Excellenza), started upon her feet; but so pale, so ghastly, and panting for breath, that I expected she would have  
 1 died

died on the spot ; and offered to bring her assistance.

“ ‘ Go,’ cried that fearful savage, ‘ bring her a glass of the wine you were drinking when I knocked at the gate.’ ”

“ I hastened to do as he commanded ; for his orders were not to be disputed, and my mind was in a whirl of confusion. I returned in less than a minute, but there was not the smallest remains to be seen of either Berenice or the Devil ; for certainly it must have been him who fetched her away.”

The Marquis was not a little affected by this strange incident. He desired Raolo to keep what he had told him secret.—“ It is a shocking event,” said he, “ and truly deplorable ! Alas ! that for a transient and trifling gratification, any human being should incur so dreadful a calamity ! Let this be to you a warning, Raolo ; for though we do not form regular compact with the Devil, we enlist under his standard,



ard, when, to gratify our passions, we stoop to vice."

The Marquis, on inquiry, found that his new guests were risen, and having warned Virginia, he introduced them to her chamber, without any detail. Virginia rejoiced at the sight of Fernando; but when Selima was presented as his wife, she heaved a sigh, and inquired after her sister Almira. The general answer, that they arrived at Madrid only the preceeding evening, prevented further inquiry, and avoided suspicions.

" I shall leave you," said the Marquis, at breakfast, " to the care of this your sister-in-law. Fernando and I have business in town of particular interest."

To Selima they left the task of making Virginia acquainted with a thousand incidents, and the chaise being in waiting, they departed for Madrid.

They arrived without accident at Madrid, and without alighting at the Palace de Denia, they drove forward to the quar-

ter of the Inquisition. They were both disappointed and grieved at being refused admission; and the porter had even the effrontery to deny, that such persons were in the house. In vain they entreated, and even offered a considerable bribe, to learn the health of their friends—the man was immovable; and tormented with uncertainty, they drove to the palace of the Marquis.

A messenger was immediately dispatched, requesting the presence of Count Potenza; from whom they hoped information and advice.

“ This unfortunate transaction,” said that nobleman, “ is involved in so many intricacies, that I very much fear it will not only go hard with Antonio, but that Valedia will be involved in his fate, as an accomplice in the murder of a nun within the holy precincts of a convent. I would even advise Fernando, for a time, to absent himself, as the malice of Don Padilla will certainly accuse him: and for a man,  
who

who cannot swim, to plunge into a rapid stream, is the height of madness."

"I thank you," said Fernando: "but having been a witness to part of this transaction, I am bound in honour to give my testimony. I will even appeal to be heard as a witness at the bar of this dread tribunal."

"As you choose," replied the Count. — "I would only observe to you, that it is not always justice can out-impudence crime.—Truth and innocence are often abashed before the brazen stare of falsehood."

"But if I cannot speak to conviction," said Fernando, solemnly, "I will appeal to the dead.—Such testimony, I believe, will be undisputed."

"They are a sort of witness I should not much depend upon," said the Count; "but you know better than I."

The Marquis of Denia was irresolute. He justly feared the proceedings of a tribunal, from whose decrees there was no



appeal; and yet he could not think of deserting his friend, when he knew that his own testimony would go far.

The Count Potenza took his leave, with proposing to make every inquiry of an acquaintance belonging to the Holy Office; but with very little expectation of information from a man, who was not only sworn to secrecy, but whose interest and life depended on his silence.

Fernando and the Marquis, after the departure of the Count, entered into a debate on the expedients they were next to adopt.

The consideration of Virginia and Selima, checked much of that ardour the Marquis would otherwise have exerted. His power at court was great; and he considered that this mode of application might be effective, and at the same time prevent their being immediately involved in the same distress.

While the Marquis of Denia was warmly enforcing this advice, the door of the  
room

room was opened, and two persons, dressed in black habits of a particular form, entered without ceremony. The two gentlemen arose at this intrusion; but, before they had time to speak, one of the strangers motioned them to silence.

“ You, Marquis of Denia, and you, Fernando de Coello,” said he, “ are cited before the most Holy Office—Follow us in silence.”

“ First,” said the Marquis, “ I would beg your permission to write a letter of material consequence, on which perhaps may depend the life of a lady.”

“ We cannot wait—our time is precious,” said one of the officers.—“ Matters of moment call us hence.”

“ Will you at least tell me, how my friend Antonio is?”

“ I know him not,” replied the man dryly.—“ We answer no questions.”

The Marquis felt himself hurt at this abrupt treatment: but he knew that not the officers of the Inquisition only, but

all petty instruments of public justice, abuse that justice; and, under that name, shield their own arrogance and tyranny. He therefore smiled at the petulance of the officer, and scarcely speaking to his friend, they entered the carriage, and proceeded in silence to the dread abode of absolute power.

They were conducted through the winding and dreary passages of this terrible habitation, to separate cells; where they were denied all intercourse with every living being, except the mute who attended them with food.



The officers of the Inquisition prepared for the examination of their prisoners; and Don Padilla being the father of the murdered lady, they proposed that he should first be called to the bar of their tribunal.

The stern countenance of the Suprema,  
and



and the harsh features of the secretaries and officials, was sufficient to terrify the guilty, and abash the innocent.

The usual solemnity was observed ; and the large hall hung with black, and adorned with symbols of justice and terror, were calculated to strike the mind with fear.

Don Padilla took his seat at the end of a long table, opposite the chief judge. He cast his eye round the hall, frowning deeply to conceal his inward agitation, and to collect firmness to resist, and to pursue his intention.

“ Do I not read villain,” said he to himself, “ upon every countenance before me ; and why should I hesitate giving the reins to my vengeance ?—Who so fit as these to execute my resolves ?”

He was roused from the reflections he entered into during the solemn pause observed before the proceedings commenced, by one of the fathers commanding him to take the oath of secrecy and truth.

“ Now,” said the Suprema, “ you, Tevarro Padilla, relate to the court the incidents you know relative to your daughter’s death ; and remember, that we have infallible means of searching to the bottom for the fact.”

“ Reverend and Holy Fathers,” answered Padilla, with a profound inclination of his head, “ I am not ignorant of the wisdom which governs your tribunal ; and rejoice that I have now an opportunity of bringing forward a train of facts and grievances, which I humbly request you to note and to redress.

“ I had two daughters, Reverend Fathers, who were the comfort of my age. The Marquis of Denia, and Fernando de Coello, endeavoured to seduce their affections. I placed my daughter, Almira, in the convent of Dominican Nuns ; which being particularly under your patronage, I considered as the most sacred asylum from the attempts of profligacy. Business required my absence at Grenada ; and returning,

turning, I had the misfortune to find my daughter, Virginia, spirited away. I hastened to Madrid, in search of my daughter, when I was confounded with finding, that without waiting for the blessings of the church, she had taken up her abode with the Marquis of Denia. I heard also, with just indignation, that the sacred walls of a convent were not sufficient to secure a daughter from seduction. I gained but too certain intelligence of my own dishonour; and that Antonio de los Velos, at the instigation of the Marquis of Denia, meditated sacrilege, in carrying away by force my daughter Almira. I should instantly have employed the arm of public justice, had I not been restrained by fears for the reputation of my family; and I adopted a secondary mode, in attempting prevention.—With this design, I caused the nightly visits of Antonio to be watched.”

“How long have you been in Madrid?” interrupted one of the Inquisitors.—“Our



information says, you arrived the day preceeding this event."

Don Padilla concealed his vexation under a smile, and bowing he continued:—"That is most true, Reverend Father. I said, I caused those nightly visits to be watched, being informed of them on my arrival.—My expression I conceive to be correct—though regarding myself it was the first night. I commanded my servant Jacques, to traverse the precincts of the garden, and to bring me his observations: but being unable to remain inactive at home, I went after him myself, to be a witness with my own eyes of the truth of the information I had received.

"I arrived at the garden wall about twelve. I could not perceive my servant; but I saw a ladder raised against the wall, the purpose of which I could not doubt. All the injuries of wounded honour conspired to raise my resentment. I forgot in the instant, that I was myself guilty of  
error

error in entering those sacred walls, and mounting the ladder, I descended into the garden. Judge, Holy Fathers, what was my horror, when I beheld, by the light of a lantern, my daughter Almira, bleeding upon the ground; Antonio de los Velos clothing himself in her sacred vestments; and a nun, named Valedia, wrapping the body of my daughter in the cloak of the Marquis—for what purpose I am ignorant, unless for the better conveying her away undetected.”

“ It seems repugnant to reason,” said the Suprema, “ that a lover should murder his mistress; that would be an instance of action unparalleled.—Think well, Padilla, what you say—remember we are not to be trifled with.”

“ Most true,” replied Padilla. “ But if it be difficult to believe that a lover, when tired of the favours of his mistress, should thus rid himself of her—think it not less unnatural for a father to murder his own child.

“ Struck, as I have said, with horror at this tragedy, I flew back, in hopes my servant might be arrived. I beheld him at the bottom of the ladder struggling with a stranger, whom I afterwards learnt was Fernando de Coello; and who, having shot my servant, Jacques, through the head, as he was attempting to prevent his entering the garden, wounded me severely with the sword he had taken from Jacques as he fell—of which wound I am now extremely ill. The rest, Holy Fathers, is known to your officials; and I humbly hope you will not permit my wrongs to be unredressed.”

Here he remained silent; and his deposition being read, and signed by himself, he was remanded back to his dungeon.

After each of the superiors had commented upon his story, an official was dispatched to bring Antonio before them.

The Marquis de los Velos, dressed in the habit assigned him by the rules of the house, was conducted, almost unable to stand,



stand, between two officials, into this awful hall of examination. His countenance was pale, and his eyes dim. His grief preyed heavy upon his soul, and he appeared now but the shadow of that young and vigorous nobleman he had been but a few weeks before.

After the usual oaths, the Suprema called upon him to confess. "Recollect yourself," said he; "confess your crimes, and throw yourself upon the mercy of the Holy Office."

"I acknowledge," replied Antonio, in a low voice, "that I am most guilty; I have been the means of death to the most lovely of women."

"Then you confess," cried the Suprema, rising from his seat with surprise in his countenance; "you confess yourself the murderer of the Lady Almira!—You acknowledge your sacrilege!—You have the effrontery to own your seduction of a nun dedicated to the veil!"

Antonio

Antonio started as from a fearful dream. "Great Judge of Mankind!" cried he, with something of frenzy, "now let the arm of justice strike upon the head of guilt! No, Holy Fathers, not with my own hand—not with my own will, was it possible! She was pure as the sacred walls where she dwelt—but my love has blasted her fame. She came to meet me, to reject my offered love; to tell me she had chosen Heaven for her husband: and by the barbarous hand of a monster she is struck dead in my arms. But I possess the power to blast that monster to the ground!"

"You rave, Marquis," interrupted the Suprema; while the others whispered amongst themselves, that grief had evidently touched his senses. Their curiosity was, however, roused by his last words; and one of them demanded, what it was at which he hinted.

Antonio had had time for recollection. He was aware, that if he touched  
upon

upon the suspicions of his friend Albert, it would involve him in the same misfortune ; and of himself he possessed no proof. He suppressed, therefore, all the suggestions of his indignation ; simply relating his first interview, and subsequent haughty refusal from Don Padilla ; who, to gratify his predominant taste for cruelty, had condemned his daughter to the habit.

The Inquisitors heard him with silence. His manner impressed them with his innocence regarding the death of Almira ; but yet the malice of Don Padilla seemed unaccountable, and being interested in a circumstance so singular, they resolved not to rise from their seats, till they had examined farther testimony : and making a signal for Antonio to be conducted away, they commanded Fernando before them.

Fernando, when he had first been conducted to his narrow cell, recollected over all the reports he had heard relative to the mystery and delay of this supreme tribunal.

Weeks



Weeks and months, he had heard, sometimes elapsed before the prisoner was called upon, that their minds might be bent to confusion; and he trembled when he thought on the consequences of such an absence from Selima, who, in a strange country, must give way to the most sinister apprehension at his sudden and unaccountable absence.

The mutes had served him once with the prison allowance, and he proposed on their next appearance, to bribe them with a valuable ring, to procure him immediate examination: little knowing that such an attempt would have been abortive, or only made use of against himself.

Such were his reflections, when he heard the bolts of the outer door withdrawn, the bar and chain taken from the inner, the door open, and two men, in the dismal habits of mutes, stand before him.

They seized him, one by each arm; and, without speaking, conducted him by various

rious subterraneous passages, lighted only by one glimmering lamp, which served to shew the figures of his guides, whose fallow countenances and hollow eyes, seemed to characterise them as imps of torment in another world. Fernando secretly shuddered as they moved slowly forward; a sensation of awful sublimity seized his soul when he entered the extensive hall, where every object which met his eye wore the livery of death.

He perceived upon the table the dagger, which, with every thing he had about his person, had been taken away on his first entrance, and now was placed before him, as an evidence of presumptive guilt: these people well knowing by what minute incidents the mind is often led to betray its cooler purpose.

Fernando was not abashed by all this preparatory shew.—He took his seat firmly, and looked round him with confidence. His voice made no alteration in its tone,  
when

when called upon to witness what he knew relative to the death of Lady Almira, his own murder of Jacques, and the intended murder of Don Padilla.

“As to the death of Almira,” said the Suprema, in a careless way, “you need not dwell much upon it—Antonio has confessed himself guilty of that action.”

“That is false!” said Fernando, with a start of indignation.

One of the Inquisitors rang a small bell, at which several mutes rushed in to seize the prisoner, and drag him to punishment, for affronting the Chief Inquisitor; but the Suprema, more temperate, motioned them to retire; and Fernando, warned by the danger, and a knowledge that his life depended on the caprice of his judges, resolved to attend with silence, or answer with circumspection.

“Are you guilty,” said the Suprema, “of the murder of Jacques, the servant of Don Padilla?”

“I am,”



"I am," replied Fernando, calmly. "It was an act, which in any other situation I should have rejoiced at; but as it served to rescue Padilla from death, by the hands of his own instrument in wickedness, I grieve that I did it."

"Do you know that your words are noted down?" said the Suprema.

"It is for that reason I am so plain," replied Fernando, bowing.

"You are an hardened criminal—you are familiar in blood," said one of the Inquisitors.

"I am familiar with the blood of the enemies of my country," replied Fernando.—"I have also been familiar with the flowing of my own in that service."

The Inquisitors looked at each other for a moment; then one of them inquired, if Fernando were not related to Padilla.

"I am his next, and I believe only male relation," answered he: "and it is,

is, therefore, I am selected, by an high power, to bring him to justice, for crimes greater than the unintentional murder of his own daughter — *that* originated in a mistake."

"Of what do you speak?" demanded the Suprema. — "Remember you have taken a solemn oath."

"I remember it well," answered Fernando. — "I am under a greater engagement than the forms of this court impose. Holy Fathers, the accusation brought against myself is too trifling, and too poorly malicious to merit your attention; but I here pledge myself, to accuse Padilla, to his face, of crimes, such as he shall not deny."

"We do not permit of such modes of proceeding," answered one of the officers. — "You must confess, and accuse before us, and us alone."

"Never," replied Fernando, firmly. — "What I would say, I shall not fear to speak

“ speak before a thousand persons; but I cannot accuse a man behind his back—the rules of a camp have taught me otherwise.”

“ We have means of bending stouter spirits,” observed one of the Inquisitors, with a malicious smile.—“ You have confessed that you know a secret—and that secret must be known to us. Whose is that dagger?”

“ It belongs at present to me,” replied Fernando.—“ How I came by it, I shall inform you in presence of Don Padilla.—It is a very singular one.”

“ It seems rusty,” said the Suprema, taking it up, and holding it raised between him and the tapers.

“ It is; and how it came so, Padilla can best tell you,” answered Fernando. “ I accuse him, Reverend Fathers, of murder, and crimes worse than adultery—and that poniard shall witness.”

“ Holy Virgin!” cried the Suprema,  
 3 changing



changing countenance, as he looked on the dagger—[A drop of blood fell from it upon the ground.]—“ This is a solemn business!—lead the prisoner hence.”

This incident excited the greatest surprise—it was such as they had never before witnessed. They were dismayed: and Fernando being led away from the hall, his request was debated upon; and, considering his character and connections, with the strange omen they had beheld, they agreed to suspend the forms of office, and confront and confound the guilty party, by the presence of the accuser: since all were prisoners alike, and no new danger could arise from a knowledge of their enemies.

According to the custom of this tribunal, the prisoners were left in total darkness concerning every incident, except what passed immediately before their eyes; and they knew neither the day nor the hour, which was again to subject them

to

to examination. — They had to dread every moment that arrived, as that which perhaps might sign their doom: a species of torture, than which nothing short of corporeal suffering is greater.

CHAP.



## C H A P. VIII.

Fancy enervates, while it soothes the heart,  
 And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight :  
 To joy each heightning charm it can impart,  
 But wraps the hour of woe in tenfold night :  
 And often, when no real ills affright,  
 Its visionary fiends in endless train,  
 Assail with equal, or superior might,  
 And thro' the throbbing heart and dizzy brain,  
 And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal  
 pain.

BEATIE'S MINSTREL.

**T**HE dead hour of midnight was judged most proper for the present singular examination : and that the ceremonial might be as impressive as possible, the antique and dismal hall, which was a subterraneous building,



building, and always hung with black, was now lighted with tapers of black wax; which shed a light that gave liberty to fancy to create what images it pleased, in the misty obscurity that every way hung around.

The mutes, whose habits were adapted close to the body, had little that could claim kindred with men in their appearance; and the Suprema, with his brethren, and the secretaries, all habitted in fantastic and black garments, adding to the expression of their unbending features, exhibited no faint sketch of what might be supposed an infernal tribunal.

To give the greater horror to the scene, the dead body of Almira, exposed on a bier, and covered only to the head, with a white cloth, was placed immediately before the seat of the prisoners.—Her features yet retained their loveliness, though the yellow finger of death had traced its mark on her cheeks.

The body of Jacques, already tainted

VOL. III.

K

with

with putrescence, was exposed on one side, covered with a black cloth; two large black tapers burning, the one at the feet, the other at the head.

Such was the solemn preparation of men, who were familiar with every mode of horror, and knew how to search the soul to its most latent feeling. The singular omen of the bleeding dagger, had excited their interests, and they had spared no means their universal information gave them, to search the truth to the bottom.

Don Padilla, pale with his wound, and harassed by his own mind, was the first who took his seat before these awful judges. Clouds of blackness hung upon his brow, and sullen silence closed his lips. He knew that Jacques could not betray him; and he resolved, with obstinate firmness, to submit to every infliction, rather than bend to a confession which must overwhelm him with infamy, and humble his haughty spirit to the dust.

Antonio and Fernando were seated on  
a bench

a bench facing Don Padilla; the one to accuse him of the murder of his daughter, the other of that of his friend: and the Marquis of Denia, who had not once been examined during the three days he had been a prisoner, was now placed on a seat by himself, in the utmost astonishment at this strange arrangement; and almost unable to command his feelings, at the sight of the body of Almira, and the dejected Antonio, in whose face were more signs of death than life.

The Suprema began with a long speech on their own mercy and justice, expatiating, with dreadful precision on the means they possessed of forcing an unwilling avowal; then demanding of Padilla, whether he yet refused to acknowledge himself guilty, which was only answered by a firm silence; he called upon Fernando to rise, and substantiate the charge he had brought.

Fernando was encouraged by the unexpected presence of his friends. He remembered that he was now at that moment,



on which hinged the crisis of his fate ; and making a solemn appeal to Heaven for calmness to proceed in his undertaking, he began by relating the first interview he had with the wounded foldier in the defile ; his subsequent adventures in the Castle of Montillo ; the discovery of Lady Zidana ; and the no less singular event of Lady Emira : concluding with his adventures on the night of his arrival in Madrid.

The Inquisitors listened in silence ; not once interrupting the narration with a remark. The countenance of Padilla was so wrapped in gloom, that his emotions eluded observation : though he inwardly trembled at a relation, which called fresh before him incidents long past, and which he would willingly have buried for ever.

“ Reverend and Holy Fathers,” said he, when Fernando ceased speaking, “ you have heard a story so absurd, that were it written in a romance, old women and children would laugh at it. You have heard of a wandering ghost—of a man murdered

twenty

twenty years since by robbers; and who now takes it into his head to trouble the dreams of this madman. You have been told a strange story of my wives, but here is nothing of proof."

"If I may have permission to speak," said the Marquis of Denia, "I would ask the prisoner a few questions, which may lead to the proof he desires."

"Proceed," said the officer, "you have permission."

"Whose dagger was that which now lays upon the table?" said the Marquis of Denia to Padilla.

"I know nothing of it," replied he: "why don't you ask my servant, who lays there murdered by your companion?"

A deep groan, which seemed to issue from the body of Jacques, for a moment silenced the whole company in dismay.—Till the Marquis collecting firmness, went on.—

"If you, Don Padilla, do not answer, the dead will! When I was at the Castle

of Montillo; when I narrowly escaped being murdered in my bed, by your tool of vengeance, that wretch who lays there a corpse, I pursued him, by the pale beams of the moon, where I beheld a sight which shook all my firmness, and has not yet been erased from my memory."

The eye of Don Padilla eagerly fixed upon the face of the Marquis, who for a moment remained silent, till he was commanded to proceed by the Chief Inquisitor.

" You know the chamber I allude to—I demand what were the objects that I beheld?"

" I am ignorant of all you allude to," replied Don Padilla, with evident uneasiness.—" What do you say you beheld?"

" I saw," said the Marquis, with a look of horror—and as he spoke, the tapers which stood near the body of Jacques suddenly expired.

The Inquisitors looked astonished, and the Marquis trembling, remained silent.

" Don



“ Don Padilla,” cried the Suprema, in an harsh voice, “ I command you instantly to say what that chamber contained.”

“ It is impossible for me to know, out of five hundred chambers, which the Marquis should choose to pry into at the hour of midnight,” answered Padilla.

“ We must have recourse to a stronger means,” said an officer.—“ My Lord, shall the rack be prepared?—This obdurate man is not to be won upon by mercy.”

“ In a little time,” said the Suprema: “ we have not yet finished our examination. You deny, Padilla, all knowledge of your wives?”

“ I do,” replied Padilla.

“ Note that,” said one of the Inquisitors: “ and now let the Marquis of Denia continue his questions.”

“ Who was it,” said the Marquis, “ that pursued me with unrelenting virulence to seek my life?—Who had recourse to enchantment to deprive me of existence? Was it not you, Don Padilla, who prompt-

ed the murderer, Jacques, to assassinate me at noon day?"

" I am totally ignorant of all you allude to," said Padilla: " were I guilty of this long catalogue of crimes, I should be the greatest monster in nature."

" That I aver to be true," said the Marquis. " Did you not attempt the honour of your own daughter? Whose bones are those, that lay exposed on the banks of the river near your castle?—You are silent. But now, Fernando, bring those proofs that shall confound the effrontery of guilt."

" First," said Fernando, " let Don Padilla approach the dead body of his daughter, lay his hand upon her cold and inanimate breast, and swear by Heaven, that he is innocent of her death."

Padilla sat still, his countenance changing to a livid paleness, and he cast a glance upon Fernando, which was meant to annihilate him.

" Rise, Padilla," cried the Suprema—  
" take

“take this dagger in one hand, advance to that murdered body, place your other hand upon the breast, and swear by Heaven, that you are innocent.”

Every eye was instantly fixed upon him; his changing countenance betrayed the working terrors of his mind. He arose, and grasping the dagger with a desperate resolution, advanced towards the bier. He suddenly paused.—“Why?” said he, in accents that faltered strangely, “why should I be put to a test such as this? Were I the criminal my accusers would represent me, I should not shudder at so impious an appeal.—Are the feelings of a father thus to be trifled with?”

“And are they the feelings of a father that agitate you, Padilla?” said the Suprema. “Is it they which make you thus to tremble?”

“I tremble!” cried Padilla, fiercely.—  
“let the guilty tremble!”

“Proceed then—your appeal will be heard if you are innocent.”



He advanced with a firm step, horror and desperation pictured on his brow. He stood a moment over the pallid corpse; then placing his hand upon the icy bosom, he attempted to speak, but shrunk back aghast and pale; for, no sooner had his hand touched the body, than the wound bled afresh.

Profuse drops of sweat gathered on his brow, from the inward workings of his soul; while horror spread its chilling powers over all who were present.

Padilla stood, during a long pause of silence, fixed as though petrified to the spot: he seemed to forget all the cautions of prudence, and the resolution of his cooler reflections—till he was roused by the loud and angry voice of the Suprema.

“ Don Padilla,” cried he, “ we have seen in you, an instance of the most daring depravity; and your guilt is clearly manifest. We need no testimony as to the murderer of Lady Almira; the poniard, which effected that unfortunate event,

is

is fitted to the sheath you had in your bosom when taken. Antonio is guilty, most guilty, and must be punished; but not for the death of your daughter. You have denied the knowledge of your wives—those ladies are this moment in Madrid. But you have asked for proof, and you shall have proof:—proof that I trust will sink you with shame, hardened as you are with crime.’

He made a signal to one of the secretaries, who rang a bell, and a distant door opened; through which entered two officials, with black wands, leading in a female, covered from her head to the ground in black. As she drew near, she threw back her veil, and the Marquis of Denia immediately recollected the fierce and masculine countenance of Berenice. He shuddered as she advanced. The wild rage of her eye appeared to him the same, as when he beheld her perform the impious incantation in the bowels of the earth; and he

secretly apprehended mischief from her presence.

She bowed her head to the Vicar General and his officers; and, at their motion, took a seat with marks of profound humility.

“Berenice,” said the Suprema solemnly, “I have called upon you, on this important occasion, as a witness against Don Padilla; whom, by your own confession, you are connected with in a train of vice, the most infamous. You have thrown yourself voluntarily upon the justice of our office. — You have accused yourself of forcery and witchcraft. — You have acknowledged tormenting the Marquis of Denia, by supernatural and diabolic enchantments—Now begin your first act of retribution, by an ample confession.”

“Reverend Fathers,” cried Fernando, “with your permission I would ask this woman one question before she begins her confession.”

“Is



“ Is it of moment?” said the Inquirer.

“ It is of consequence to me,” answered Fernando.

“ Say on then.”

Fernando turned to Berenice—“ Tell me,” said he, “ if you were ever nurse to a young lady; and what became of that lady?”

“ I was nurse,” replied she, “ to a daughter of Count Ferendez. I sold her to a slave-merchant, when circumstances obliged me to quit Tunis.”

“ I am satisfied,” cried Fernando, with pleasure on his countenance. “ I have now not the shadow of a doubt remaining. That child is my wife; the only remaining offspring of the injured Count Ferendez: and, since the death of Almira, the only living daughter of Lady Zidana. Providence has so ordered, that she should have no disputant to her claim on her father’s possessions.”

During

During this interrogation and reply, Don Padilla had never once moved from the attitude his horror had imposed upon him. The entrance of Berenice, the partner of many a crime, deprived him for a time almost of recollection; but this information roused the malice of his mind, and turning towards Fernando, he cried:

“ Now, wretch! — now thou thinkest that thy plans have succeeded—that thou shalt be happy! Thou hast pursued me, to bring me to death, for an act I never performed.—Thou hast delighted in the idea of my destruction—But now, now will I sting thee to the soul, and destroy, for the rest of thy days, every portion of tranquillity!—Behold the man you have destroyed—and in that man behold—your father!”

“ Impossible!” cried Fernando, trembling. “ My mother, indeed, was your sister—my father died before I was born—but it was impossible I should be your son.”

“ It

“ It is most true,” cried Padilla, with a voice that echoed through the hall, “ thou art my son, and that by my own sister; thou art the offspring of guilt.—It was on thy account that I first fled my native country; it was thee the evil spirit of Count Ferendez selected, as his first instrument; and it is thou who hast brought thy father to the grave.”

“ Great Judge of Mankind!” cried Fernando, in agony, “ can this be true?—O! let me instantly die!—Let me never more see the day!”

“ What proof do you bring of an assertion like this?” cried the Suprema, in amazement.—“ We cannot believe so unnatural a crime, even in you.”

“ Have you not a little ivory box,” said Don Padilla, “ which you took from me on my first entering this place?”

“ It is here,” replied one of the secretaries; “ it contains some trinkets.”

“ It contains also a secret spring,” said Padilla—“ I will open it.”

“ Hand



“ Hand it to him,” said one of the Inquisitors.

Don Padilla took the box, and opening its secret partition, took out a small billet, which he handed to the Chief Inquisitor, who read these words :

“ Horror seizes my blood, and overcomes my faculties, at the dreadful discovery you have made me ! Was it then you, Tevarro, that I received unknowingly ?—and have I been guilty of the most horrid of crimes ? Fly, thou monster of depravity !—I give thee warning.—For, if I live to rise from the bed I now lay upon, I will pursue thee !—and the guilty offspring of thy guilt, shall cry for curses on thy head !”

“ No more, no more,” cried Fernando, in agony.—“ I am a wretch, and will not live !”

At these words he snatched from the table the dagger, which was yet red with  
the

the blood of Almira, and would have plunged it into his heart, had not the Marquis of Denia grasped him by the arm, and powerfully withheld him.

Don Padilla smiled malice at this scene; his eye shot with triumph, and he called on Fernando, in a taunting voice, to strike.

The Inquisitors demanded silence, and ordered the three friends to be conducted away: when Berenice, who had stood calmly during this ferment, cried with a loud voice, that before Fernando left the hall, she had something of the utmost consequence to disclose.

The Suprema waved his hand that she should be heard; and commanded her to advance near the body of Almira.

“ But a little time,” said she, “ and such an event as this would have given pleasure to the depravity of my mind. Reverend Fathers, this man, this Padilla, is not the father of Fernando.”

Then loosing from her neck the portrait of Padilla, she opened the spring, and taking

ing thence the ring, she raised it to the view of Padilla.—

“ Know you this token ?” cried she.—  
 “ Do you not remember the occasion on which it was given ? It was I who personated that sister, whom your vile inclinations attempted to seduce. It was I, who finding your mind depraved as my own, accompanied you, in the habit of a page, to America, and was the companion of your excesses. ’Tis true, the lady your sister believed that you had deceived her, and that the little Fernando was the offspring of your villainy, her husband having been some time dead.”

Don Padilla, who had attended to her words, and saw the ring, which he perfectly remembered, raised his hand, which yet held the fatal dagger, to plunge it into her bosom ; but her eye was too quick for his motion, and she darted from the blow. Padilla was wild with frenzy ; he saw all his machinations recoil upon himself, and again raising his arm, he plunged the wea-  
 pon



pon into his own bosom—falling prostrate upon the dead body of his daughter.

Antonio and the Marquis of Denia raised him up, but his life ebbed fast away; and uttering the most incoherent expressions of horror and frenzy, he expired.

The countenances of all present expressed their dismay, and it was long before any degree of tranquillity was restored; but two mutes having removed the body, the examination of Berenice went on.

“It is necessary in this case,” said the Suprema, “that no doubt should remain, that may discompose the future tranquillity of Fernando. It appears from your words, that his reputed father was dead a longer time before his birth, than the laws of nature require. Don Padilla, you say, was not his father—who then was?”

“The Marquis de los Velos,” replied Berenice.—“The father of Antonio, and the uncle of Valedia. It was he who took care of him on his mother’s death; educated

cated him, and carried his own secret to the grave."

"Are we then brothers," cried Fernando, grasping the hand of Antonio: "but perhaps you will disdain me for my birth."

"Never!" cried Antonio. "You will not only be my brother, but very soon my heir; as I am certain I shall not live long."

"Courage, my friend!" said the Marquis of Denia; "you are yet extremely young in life, and have yet much pleasure before you." Then turning to Berenice—"I would wish to know," said he, "by what means you became a sharer in all these secrets, which, I own, appear a little romantic?"

"I was," replied Berenice, "the companion of Fernando's mother, and early fell in love with her brother Tevarro. The Lady Isabella was courted by the Marquis de los Velos, but her father obliged her to  
marry

marry against her desire, and the Marquis was banished the house. Her husband dying a few months after her marriage, the Marquis again renewed his visits, and the Lady Isabella was privately married to him, before the time of customary mourning expired.

“ I was secret to their intrigue, frequently admitting De los Velos by a private door. Don Padilla was enamoured of his sister; and ventured to disclose his passion to me, with a considerable bribe to admit him to her chamber. I confess that I deceived him, and admitted him to my own; and thus a double intrigue was veiled under the mystery of night. I bound Padilla over by such vows of secrecy on his nocturnal visits, and threatened him so strongly with public vengeance, if he ever dropped to me the smallest hint during the day, that he was not likely to discover the secret. It was a letter, which he wrote in a fit of passion to his sister, which discovered to her what she believed to be her



guilt; supposing that he had visited her in place of the Marquis; and it was her answer, which you have read, that occasioned his flight. The Marquis de los Velos would have owned his marriage with Lady Isabella, had she lived; but the fancied discovery of so dreadful a crime, overcame her at once, and she had scarce life remaining to bring Fernando into being, the real date of whose birth was held a secret from the world, as his mother had been rarely visible since the death of her husband. The Marquis de los Velos retained his own secret; and Fernando in his house received an asylum, and when of age, an appointment in the army."

"Berenice," said the Suprema, "Don Padilla being now dead, your confession cannot affect him, and we already know too many of his crimes to desire addition to the number.—I charge you then, as you dread our vengeance, to answer the questions I shall ask. You have told us, you have been guilty of witchcraft, that you  
have

have harassed the life of the Marquis of Denia; now explain to us the circumstances."

"First, my Lord," interrupted one of the Inquisitors, "Let the Marquis say, what objects they were he beheld in the chamber at the Castle of Montillo, and which a signal incident prevented his before declaring."

"It was myself," replied Berenice, looking round her with fear.

"You!" cried the Marquis. "Good Heavens! did you devour human flesh, and prey upon the carcases of dead men?"

The Inquisitors leaned forward with new expectation.

"No," she replied.—"You beheld me in the midst of a diabolic preparation. I was at that time composing a powerful spell, which has since been exerted on yourself, and undermined your health and your happiness, till it nearly reduced you to the grave. You saw me half naked, and disfigured with blood. The body

I was

I was dividing, was that of Lopez, which Jacques had torn from its grave ; and which I was preparing over a slow fire, made of dead men's bones and ivy leaves. Your friend, Fernando, discovered me once in my search amongst the graves beneath the Castle.

“ It was I who called upon you from a grotto in the garden of Aranjuez ; it was I who contrived means to fright you, with a chymical inscription in your chamber ; and I took no small pleasure in perceiving you waste away, under the power of my charms. It was more from the love of mischief and depravity of soul, than any particular enmity I had against you, that I employed those powerful means, and brought infernal spirits to my aid.

“ I commanded the demons of the air, the whirlwind, and the blast ; and but for your protecting angel, should have levelled all your possessions to the ground. You was present when I performed a grand incantation, and brought Lucifer himself before



fore me. I knew that the schemes of Jacques would not succeed, though he pretended, by human means, to rival my power. My design was to have had you transported, together with myself, to the mouth of Mount Etna; but your presence and prayers enraged the fiend and curbed his powers. He left me in anger; and believing you too far gone to recover and escape from my hands, I first attended to relieve Jacques, who, being wounded and half buried, would shortly have expired. Your escape, and the failure of my second incantation, filled my mind with dismay. I beheld that my skill was to be overcome by the sacred name of a superior Being; and I began to think on my own situation, exposed as I was to the certain vengeance of an infernal fiend, who knows no greater glory than in the seduction of an human creature.

“ The compact I had engaged in, would expire in the revolution of a few years. I looked back upon those which were past,

and asked myself, if I had tasted that happiness I had flattered myself, in the possession of such unlawful power, and the gratification of every passion. My powers had never produced me good, and my passions had reduced my frame. I beheld the extent of my folly and my crimes, but I saw no way of escape, but by breaking my engagements, which I shuddered to do, as the penalty drove me to distraction."

Here Berenice remained silent and agitated; till she was again roused by the Suprema, demanding what penalty she had bound herself to abide by.

"My engagements," replied she, "allowed but one means of being cancelled, and that was terrible to my mind. Satan, in his compact, had bound himself in certain instances to my will; and my soul became subject to his empire, provided he did not suffer me to die by the hands of justice.

"My returning inclination to virtue was too feeble to combat the terrible idea  
of

of throwing myself upon this expedient. I shuddered at the thought of a public and a sudden death, and my mind was involved in a chaos of confused and varying images. Sometimes I feared, that were I to break my engagements, and die by the hands of the executioner, my crimes were too great to be pardoned, and I should only abridge myself of the few short years which yet remained. At others, I thought of becoming a member of a convent, and by penitence and prayer, interceding with Heaven for mercy: but how could a wretch like me expect mercy? or what prayers could atone for my crimes?

“ Agitated and harassed by thoughts like these, and beholding no means of relief, I gave way to despondence, and in a fit of despair plunged myself into the river; in the determined purpose of learning my future fate, and in a faint hope of being lost in eternal oblivion.

Fernando rescued me from the waves; and the house of the Marquis of Denia re-



ceived me. It was there, for the first time, I ventured to raise my mind towards Heaven, and to search for examples of its goodness and mercy. Examples innumerable crowded upon me, and a ray of hope darted through the darkness of my soul. 'I will rise,' said I to myself, 'and go to the house of my Father, if he will but make me one of his hired servants.'

" I was interrupted in these meditations by the entrance of Raolo, the Marquis's servant, who informed me that a black man desired to speak with me. The hour of the night, the description of the person, but too well agreed.—This was the form the roaming fiend was to take when he should pay me his final visit, and claim me as his own. The time of our engagement had years yet to run; but what are promises, what are compacts with the prince of deceit, and the father of lies? No sooner were we left by Raolo, than touching me with his hand, I became enshrouded in a veil of invisibility; and he conducted

conducted me in a few moments to that spot on the bank of the river, where I had the preceding day resolved on suicide.

“ ‘ Weak and insignificant reptile,’ cried he, ‘ didst thou think by prayers, and penitence, and tears, to invoke indignant Heaven to thine aid? Didst thou not on this spot meditate murder, and that of thyself? —How was justice satisfied by a new act of outrage? an act which gave thee more fully to my power, and would ere this have plunged thee into the eternal gulph of woe. Prepare thee, for thou hast antedated by this deed our compact, and from this spot thou never shalt depart with life.’

“ I was not altogether abashed by this terrible sentence.—I had been familiar with horror, and more than once beheld fiends of various and disgusting forms; fiends, in whose features were for ever impressed the marks of unchecked passions, and the stings of never-ceasing conscience.

“ ‘ What is it that you say?’ said I, calmly. ‘ Think you to deceive me, while

you are only deceiving yourself? Knowest thou not, that my destruction by thy hands, will release me from my engagement? It will be retribution to society in part, if I fall by that power which prompted me to err. Rememberest thou not, that thy compact is cancelled if I die a violent death.'

" His eyes became red with anger.— 'How?' cried he, in a voice which shook the branches of the forest, 'dare you stand to reason with me? I, who am prince of the air, can sink thee to non-existence in a moment! Do I not ride on the wings of the whirlwind, and shall I stand reasoning with thee? Hast thou not witnessed my power, and beheld me grasp the subtle lightning in my hand? Hast thou not seen me enveloped in flame and yet live?—Yet thou dardest to parley with me! Fall down at my feet and adore me, and all the pleasures of life shall yet be thine.'

" I remembered in my own mind, the powers of a superior name in the cavern  
of



of my incantations, where the Marquis escaped my wrath — a name which men ought to tremble to pronounce — I collected my fleeting spirits, and starting a few paces from his lifted arm. —

“ ‘Boaster!’ cried I, ‘thou vauntest of thy powers, but they are thine only as a permitted instrument of Almighty wrath! In his name, who maketh the mountains to tremble, and the waters of the deep to pant, I conjure thee to go hence, thou fiend of darkness and deceit!’

“ No sooner had I uttered these tremendous words, than a fearful burst of thunder shook the forest; the earth flud-dered beneath my feet; the waves of the river were agitated; and the bending trees seemed parting by the roots.

“ The form of the fiend became changed. I beheld before me an hideous misshapen serpent of enormous length, covered with black scales. He fled from my tortured sight, uttering a loud and continued hiss, which seemed to pierce through all

nature with horror : my soul melted within me, and I sunk insensible upon the ground.

“ When I recovered, my first resolution was to deliver myself up to public justice, in the faint and distant hope of future mercy. I hastened immediately to Madrid, and put myself into your power. Holy Fathers, I have now only to request that I may suffer the judgment due to my crimes, and which, however dreadful, I implore, as the only means of my safety hereafter.”

Here Berenice ceased her dreadful narrative. She was pale as the corpse of Almira ; nor were the Inquisitors, hardened as they were to scenes of misery and distress, unaffected by this conclusion. A general silence reigned for some time in this awful place. The series of dark events which had been revealed, supplied sufficient matter to reflection ; and the dead bodies before them, affected the soul in its most vulnerable part ; and, without comment,  
inspired

inspired a profound sense of the dispensations of Heaven, and the insignificance of human nature.

At length the Suprema arose, and making the sign of the cross, he began.—

“ The events which have this night taken place, are the most singular in the annals of this institution. Providence has discovered events, which human knowledge never would have brought to light. A long chain of circumstances have been wound up to a crisis, and the guilty led to receive the award of their crimes. But one circumstance remains unexplained, and that relates to Fernando, whose connection with the wandering spirit of Count Ferendez seems not yet dissolved.”

“ It is a small favour,” interrupted Berenice, “ I am permitted to perform, in retribution for unnumbered ills. That unhappy phantom will ever pursue Fernando, till he shall be pacified. He ever attends him invisible, and at this moment sits at the foot of the corps of Almira.”



The Inquisitors and the prisoners shuddered, and turned their eyes towards the spot; but they could see nothing, except pale body of the murdered maid.

“Do not amuse us with falsehood,” said the Suprema. “If what you say be truth, why is he not visible also to us?”

“Your eyes,” replied Berenice, “are not like mine, cleared from the gross films of materiality—it is a qualification which I have dearly purchased. If you will, in the name of the church, absolve me from guilt, I will command this unhappy spirit to become visible, and say what are his particular desires, and how he shall be tranquilized in the grave; then shall Fernando enjoy that uninterrupted repose he so well merits.”

“You are so commanded,” said the Suprema; “provided there be no profanation of sacred things in the ceremony.”

Berenice bowed, and the Inquisitors prepared themselves to witness what human eyes have so rarely seen, and which

is, for the wisest of purposes, concealed from general observance. What indeed would be the situation of mankind, if all the spirits of the air could hold visible communication, and connect themselves to tangible forms.

The three friends awaited in fearful expectation the motions of this extraordinary woman; who, taking a crucifix which stood upon the table, retired a few paces from the circle of the company, and muttering to herself some unknown words, remained silent, gazing earnestly through the thick gloom which hung round the walls of this subterranean vault.

The company were so profoundly silent that a breath might have been heard; and in a few moments a dark shadowy form was seen to advance, with a solemn step, from the obscurity towards Berenice.

The Marquis and Fernando, though prepared, started up with an involuntary emotion of terror, at again beholding a shade

so familiar to their eyes ; but the benumbing presence of the spectre fixed them again to their seats, nor had any of the company power to move.

It advanced to the corpse of Almira, where it remained stationary. Its eyes were without motion, and its livid cheeks characterised decay. Its lips were pale and bloodless, and the skin upon its hands seemed drawn tight upon the bones. Horror ran through the frame of all who dared fix their eyes upon this unhappy sprite ; and Berenice alone retained any presence of mind.

“ Why,” cried she, extending the crucifix towards him, ‘ why is it that you trouble the peace of the living ? ’

No motion was visible on his lips—A hollow voice replied as from its breast :

“ From the heir of my destroyer I have received retribution : let him bury my bones, which lay at the entrance of a ruined aqueduct ; let him offer up mass  
for



for my tired soul; then shall repose, and my only daughter, be his reward."

"Say," said Berenice, "why thou weren't condemned to wander?—since all who die by violence are not thus necessitated."

"Shall the purposes of eternity be revealed to mortal man?" replied the spirit. "Think you, Berenice, that I could ever have been the intimate, the associate of Don Padilla, and be innocent?—Seek not thee to pry into the councils of Heaven."

He remained silent; and Berenice demanded of the Suprema, if she should ask any more questions. That judge had no power to speak; wonder had wrapped up the purposes of his soul, and spread unknown feelings through his mind.

"Go hence!" cried Berenice to the spirit, waving the cross in the air, with a motion of command.—"Let the will of Heaven be obeyed!"

The form of the spirit melted away.

No

No sound was heard at its retreat, and the recovery of the company from a state of suspended animation, bespoke its final departure.

The Inquisitors made no remarks before the prisoners, astonishment sufficient was impressed upon their features. After a pause of some minutes the Suprema arose, saying—"Marquis of Denia and Fernando de Coello, you are at liberty, and shall be conducted hence."

At his signal, the mutes who had entered with Berenice, advanced to lead them from the hall; but the Marquis of Denia, bowing, requested permission to speak. The Vicar General nodded, and he went on.

"My Lords, what I would say is in extenuation of the crimes of Antonio and Valedia, both of them persons of family and distinction; and however guilty they may appear, that guilt must certainly be diminished when you reflect, Reverend Fathers, not on the passions of youth, these  
can

can be no excuse for crime ; but upon the supernatural events which you have witnessed, and which were so materially connected with this unfortunate transaction. I am well convinced, no punishment you could inflict upon Antonio could equal what he now suffers, and the death of Almira will never quit his memory during life. Valedia is of that sex which claims compassion in its weakness."

" I have heard your arguments," replied the Suprema. " We ever attend to any circumstance that can be favourable to the guilty ; but were vice permitted to act with impunity under any circumstances, it would be encouragement and president for new crimes. 'Tis true, Antonio had not effected his purpose, Almira not being taken from the gardens, and therefore we spare his life ; but he must pay a fine, which we shall appoint : and Valedia must perform a penance, such as shall be the pleasure of the Lady Abbess of the Dominican nuns.

" The



“ The body of Almira shall be delivered to you Fernando ; it will be your duty to inter it, and the remains of Count Ferendez.”

The Suprema then made a motion that they should be led away ; Antonio to his cell, and the Marquis and Fernando to receive their clothes and other articles, before they entered again into the world.

Berenice remained alone in the hall, with the officers ; to satisfy whose curiosity, she underwent another examination on the nature of spirits and departed souls : but this examination was conducted with such profound secrecy, that the circumstances never transpired. The crimes of this wretched woman were of such nature, that they could not be forgiven by man ; and some of them having flagrantly outraged all the laws of society, of moral establishment, and religious ordinance ; she was sentenced to solitary confinement, in one of the cells of the In-

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quisition,

quition, for a year and a day; that she might have time to repent, before she terminated a life of crime, at the public *auto da fe*.

## CHAP. IX.

And yet, alas! the real ills of life  
 Claim the full vigour of a mind prepar'd.  
 Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife,  
 Its guide experience, and truth its guard.  
 We fare on earth as other men have fared,  
 Were they successful? Let us not despair—  
 Was disappointment oft their sole reward?  
 Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare,  
 How they have borne the load ourselves are doomed  
 to bear.

BEATIE'S MINSTREL.

**W**HEN the Marquis and his friend  
 Fernando quitted the prison, the morning  
 sun just began to gild the spires of Madrid.  
 The freshness of the air, and the bright-  
 ness of day, made them fancy themselves  
 arisen from a sepulchre; whose dreary and  
 fearful



fearful images flitted through their minds, and seemed to add a zest to their present existence.

They hastened to find Lady Emira and Zidana, whose arrival they had learned in a place, where they had least expectation of such information; and they admired the universal intelligence this tremendous tribunal possessed.

They learnt on inquiry, that Almonzer had conducted them to the Marquis' country house, where all was confusion and alarm. The sudden disappearance of these noblemen almost reduced the ladies to despair; and their joy at again meeting, was equal to their late grief.

The Marquis and his friend remained studiously silent upon the events of the Inquisition, waiting for the liberation of Antonio and Valedia, before they should communicate the eventful story: which would wound the breast of Virginia with grief, at the miserable death of her beloved sister; and impress the whole group with a mixture

mixture of horror and astonishment at the singular fate of Don Padilla, who had died as he had lived, in the midst of crimes.

It was not many days before Antonio was liberated, and joined their society; but his loss, and the manner of that loss, dwelt heavy upon his mind, and unfitted him for company, and the satisfaction of his friends. The image of Almira constantly haunted his imagination, and his friends feared as much for his life as for his health. The first subject which made any impression upon him, and aroused the dormant faculties of his mind, was intelligence that Valedia was condemned to the veil, for the part she had taken, and without which Almira could never have been seduced from her duty.

He recollected with horror, that it was purely to oblige him she had first entered herself as a boarder; and the sacrifice she was to perform appeared in his eyes equal to death, and determined him again to hazard, and even to die, rather than permit

mit that she should become a victim to his misfortunes.

Fernando was impatient to perform the last rites to the decaying remains of Count Ferendez ; and the Marquis being unwilling again to quit the company of Virginia, he departed with Almonzer and the two ladies ; carrying with him, in sad procession, the body of Almira, which was attended by Selima, with all the affection of a sister.

Fernando took possession of the Castle of Montillo ; he enstated the wives of Don Padilla in different apartments, at their choice ; and, collecting the bones of Count Ferendez, he celebrated his obsequies with magnificence.

The coffin of Almira was placed by the side of that of the Count, in the vaults beneath the Castle of Montillo ; and Fernando could not avoid shuddering, as he cast his eye round that dreary range of mildewed chambers, where he had once followed the spectre of the man, whose  
ashes



ashes now were laid in funeral array, and for the repose of whose soul, mass was chanted in the chapel of the Castle, and at the cathedral church of Grenada. A monk from a neighbouring convent officiated; after which ceremony, the chambers of the Eastern wing were opened, and the office of exorcism performed, to satisfy the superstition of the servants, who otherwise would not enter that range of building.

Fernando undisturbed in the happy possession of his charming bride, did not remain long absent from his friends: the Marquis, whom he found happy in the prospect of Virginia's speedy convalescence; and Antonio, whom he found miserable, in the prospect of Valedia's being condemned to take the veil.

This ceremony, which is usually celebrated with great pomp, was to be performed in the church of the Dominican nuns; nor were all the intercessions of Valedia's friends, able to bend the determined will of the provoked abbess; who  
con-

considered, as a point of honour, the establishment of her own power, in superiority to the interests and intercessions of some of the most noble families in Madrid. The usual time was abridged, and two months after the death of Almira, Valedia was to perform her unwilling vows. Vows which the frailness of human nature is seldom enabled to keep without regret, and which the most superstitious enthusiasm must have at first invented.

Antonio, as the time approached, became nearly distracted; he forgot Almira in his grief for Valedia, nor could the advice of his friends the least console him. He determined to witness the tragical sacrifice himself, since he found the impossibility of averting it; and vowed, that as soon as she should have pronounced her obligations, he would shut himself up in a monastery, and take the habit of a monk.

Reason had no power to move his determinations, and his friends prepared their  
 their

their minds for some unforeseen catastrophe.

The day arrived; and early as the doors of the church were opened, the three friends took their stations, agitated by a thousand alarms.

The crowd in the church was great, for rumour had been busy in reporting, that a lady torn from her lover, was that day to bid adieu to the world; and every eye which turned upon Antonio, did not hesitate to believe that he was the unfortunate man: and a thousand whispers ran through the building, on the cruelty of wounding so amiable a nobleman.

But when Valedia, clad in the simple habit of the house, entered with a steady composure and dignified air; when her beauty appeared unadorned, and in all the sweetness of modesty; an universal murmur of discontent broke forth: and had not a strong brass railing parted the populace from the nuns, violence might have been  
been



been apprehended from their indiscreet pity.

Antonio gazed upon the solemn ceremony with a fixed and calm despair, which was partly excited by the determined composure of Valedia; and his friends hoped that her apparent tranquillity would reconcile him to the transaction.

The priests in glittering attire chaunted their hymns, and the nuns seemed ready to embrace a new sister; when it became the part of Valedia, by a verbal confession, to adopt a life of penitence and prayer.

She moved calmly forwards towards the officiating priest, who was the archbishop of Madrid; and making an obeisance with reverence, she raised her voice that it might be distinctly heard; while Antonio, unable to behold this final and irrevocable deed, closed his eyes, and leaned upon the arm of the Marquis.

“ I protest,” cried Valedia, “ in the name of the ever-blessed and glorious Vir-

gin, conceived without sin! that I cannot voluntarily accept the vows; that I am unfitting for the holy character of a nun; and, that I am compelled thus publicly to speak, that my actions may be publicly judged, and not buried within the silent solitary walls of this place!"

An universal cry of astonishment ran through the church. The Lady Abbess and the nuns were involved in confusion; and the archbishop, who was a man in years, and of irreproachable character, was obliged to pledge his word to the people, that he would himself examine into the affair, or their murmurs might have produced unpleasant consequences.

At so sudden and unexpected an event, Antonio was no longer master of his feelings. He conjured the archbishop not to pronounce a final sentence, till he should calmly have heard from his own mouth the whole chain of events which had led to this singular incident; and it was with difficulty the Marquis and Fernando dragged

ged him by absolute force from the church, where, in his first transport, he would have related to the spectators, the private history of those events which have here been detailed.

Fernando conducted Antonio to his own palace; while the Marquis waited upon the archbishop, with whom he made use of such powerful arguments, that he obtained his favour and friendship: and, insinuating that a considerable sum should be bestowed upon the foundation, he hoped to soften the Abbess, whose heart was not insensible to the accumulation of wealth upon her house; well knowing that wealth is the foundation of honour.

The Marquis, on his return, spoke seriously to Antonio; endeavouring to discover if any portion of love entered into his anxiety for the fate of Valedia; and was not a little astonished at his reply.

“ I know,” said he, “ that I have injured my cousin. Her goodness in at-

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tempting



tempting so hazardous an expedient, roused my admiration; her failure and suffering for my sake, excited my gratitude; and the painful uncertainty I laboured under, has attached me to her by a stronger tie. We have both been unfortunate in our first passion.—Fernando was educated with her at my father's country house, she has confessed to me her love for him, but he is married to another. Almira is lost to me for ever; and I know not another Lady in Madrid, with whom I would more willingly engage my hand and my esteem—and perhaps time and habit may produce a mutual affection.”

The Marquis was pleased with these prudent reflections; which shewed him, that notwithstanding his grief, Antonio had made solid observations, and he no longer feared for his understanding or health. He employed all the power of his connections at Court; which, with the good offices of the archbishop, after many  
delays

delays and many difficulties, restored Valedia again to her friends.

During the period this affair had been in agitation, Virginia had wholly recovered, and the day was fixed for the marriage of the Marquis. A day which Antonio, who was naturally impatient, could not permit to pass, without exerting all his persuasion to gain Valedia, not only to accompany her new friend to the altar, but there to pledge her faith with his.

The united arguments of all her friends obliged her to acquiesce ; and the Marquis of Denia, who ever considered those around him as much as himself, made his faithful servant Raolo, who had grown from a boy in his service, happy in the promised hand of little Martha, who had been sent for to attend on Virginia.

Thus happiness at length crowned the virtues and difficulties of the three friends, and united them as well in the bands of concord, as in the ties of relative affection.

Thus

Thus shall virtue, when pursued without deviation, triumph over vice: or if it apparently fails in worldly prosperity, it will ensure to the mind of its possessor that tranquillity and peace, which power cannot give, and which possessions cannot bestow.



THE END.



